

THE CUSTOMS JOURNAL

OFFICIAL JOURNAL EST. 1904 CUSTOMS & EXCISE

PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

Vol. 69. No. 956.

May, 1942.

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CORRESPONDENCE, LITERARY MATTER, ETC.—Letters to the Editor, and articles and correspondence intended for publication should be addressed to the Editor, "The Customs Journal," H.M. Customs and Excise, 5, Odessa Street, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.16. It is essential that all matter for insertion in the monthly issue should reach the Editor on or before the 10th of the month of publication. Articles submitted need not be typewritten, but the use of one side of the paper renders a great assistance.

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BACK NUMBERS.—May be obtained by applying to the Association Offices, 2d. per copy (post free).

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—Retired Officers and outside persons wishing to become subscribers may do so on application to the Organising Secretary, 6, Brook Lane, Bexley, Kent. The charge is 3s. 0d. per annum, post free.

DOCKSIDE SPRING

The sun is on the water,
That is all.

No songs out-sing the winches,
No flutt'ring in the cranes.
No grass nor even groundsel
To edge the railroad lanes.
No songs disturb the rumblings
Of tall tips pouring coal.
No single grace of movement
But tug-boats on patrol.
No hint of spring, no whisper,
No promise by the way.
All, all as through the winter,
Just grey and black and grey.

The sun is on the water,
That is all.

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HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION.

HEREFORDSHIRE.—Farmhouse holiday accommodation. Beautiful country. Terms £3 3s. 0d.—Phone: Much Marcle 213. Goodwin, "Hillend," Much Marcle, Ledbury.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

to 14th May, 1942.

TRANSFERS.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Biss, W. C., Holyhead, Chester to Methil, Dundee.
Spargo, C. H., Liverpool to Hull.

OFFICER LEAVING THE SERVICE.

RETIREMENT—ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—
Turnbull, W. J., London.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS.

Marriott, E. L., Preventive Officer.
Murphy, J., Preventive Officer.
Prior, D., Waterguard Superintendent, 2nd Class.
Reeve, W. E., Preventive Officer.
Twist, C. H., Preventive Officer.

OBITUARY

Mr. W. McKELVIE, A.P.O., Methil.

It was with deep regret that his late colleagues learned last month that official confirmation has now been given to the report that Sgt.-Pilot William McKelvie, R.A.F.V.R., was killed in action in October of last year.

It is understood that he was piloting a Spitfire in an offensive sweep over Northern France, and it is believed that his remains are buried at Dunkirk.

He was 24 years of age at the time of his death and had been in the Department since 1937. He joined the Royal Air Force in July, 1940, and had experienced a good spell of operational flying, including night-flying in such incidents as the blitz on Clydeside.

Bill was very much a "live wire" in every sphere, and we can have no doubt whatever that this last scrap of his was carried through on his part with all his characteristic keenness and determination. We have heard that he got on very well in the Royal Air Force and if he was as popular as he was in civil life we are sure this was so. He was indeed of the best type of man, and his successors in the Waterguard Service in the years to come should look back on his memory with pride and respect.

He was the youngest of a family of nine and to Mr. and Mrs. McKelvie, who live at Burntisland, the Staff at Methil extend their sympathy in their loss, which must have been all the harder after so many months of uncertainty and false hopes.

Mr. T. A. STUART, A.P.O., Liverpool.

After the terrible shock of hearing of Tom's death, the next reaction of his Liverpool colleagues (among whom, without any reflection on others, he was the most popular of the officers separated from wife and children by the war) was, what was his most outstanding characteristic? He was gay and easy-going, the last one normally to be expected to suffer from mental strain. He was proud, in a noble way, befitting an ex-soldier, of his personal appearance, and proud, too, as all his family, I believe, of his honour. We could not believe he would do a dishonourable thing. He might be over-generous, no more. But his most notable attribute was a quality of friendship probably even more well known in other ports: among his old boxing friends, for instance. It is as a friend and nothing else that we will remember and respect him, leaving him in other roles for others' sorrow. To his family we send deepest sympathy.

C.F.S.

OUR BOYS

The eldest son of Mr. J. H. Stewart, W. Sur., London, 2nd Lieut. R. Y. S. Stewart, Royal Corps of Signals, was killed by enemy action in Assam on 16th May. Aged 25 years, 2nd Lieut. Stewart was a B.A. (double Hons.) of London.

His second son, Pilot Officer Ian H. Stewart, was with the Air Striking Force in France and was invalided out in September, 1940, when only 20 years of age. He is now a 1st Officer (Ferry Pilot) with the A.T.A., and during the past 12 months has flown 33 different types of aircraft.

CURRENT COMMENTS

War Bonus.

THE National Staff Side issued the following statement on May 7th:—

"Members of the War Bonus Committee of the National Staff Side met the Official Side on May 6th to hear their reply to the case for an improvement in the bonus presented by the Staff Side on April 10th. No conclusive stage was reached and a further joint meeting has been arranged for May 14th. In the meantime the Staff Side are submitting a memorandum reinforcing the arguments upon which they have based their claim."

At the time of writing we have no report of the result of the latter meeting.

Cost of Living.

	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
1940/41 ..	85	87	89	92	93	96	97	97
1941/42 ..	99	99	99	100	101	100	100	100

Waterguard Redundancies.

Discussions in this matter are still proceeding.

At the April meeting of the Departmental Council it was agreed that informal talks between the two sides should take place. As a result of these discussions the Official Side undertook to contact the Treasury and find out whether suitable jobs in other Departments could be found for the redundant Chief Preventive Officers and, if so, where such jobs would arise. Subsequent negotiations and arrangements will, of course, depend on the result of these inquiries.

Split Attendances.

For many years the Association has been concerned at the situation created at many ports by the slavish adherence to the phrase "regular every-day duty" in connection with the added hour for split attendances. In the last attempt to remedy this, a claim was made that where split attendance was considered so necessary as to warrant its inclusion in the scheme of attendance (whether it be for a day or every day) then the added hour to the second attendance should apply.

We are pleased to report that this has been accepted and the paragraph 109 of Ext. Inst. Vol. 2 has been amended accordingly.

Mileage Allowance.

In view of the abolition of the basic petrol ration and the complete cessation of ordinary private motoring as from 1st July it has been necessary to review the present mileage system and rates.

E.O.C. 583 has now been issued and Departmental instructions based thereon will follow.

The new scheme applies to officers using their cars on official journeys and whose annual mileage on these journeys is expected to be at least 2,000 miles.

In brief, where an officer gets no petrol for private purposes he will not have to obtain an Excise licence (the car being covered by O.H.M.S. Certificate), but he must effect adequate insurance. An annual allowance plus a flat rate mileage allowance will be payable monthly or quarterly in arrear as follows:—

Up to and including 8 h.p.	£20 ..	2½d. per mile
Over 8 and up to 10 h.p.	£22 10s.	2¾d. " "
Over 10 and up to 14 h.p.	£25 ..	3d. " "
Over 14 h.p.	£27 10s.	3¼d. " "

An additional ½d. per mile (not ¼d. per passenger) may be paid when one or more official passengers are carried.

Uniform and Coupons.

In reply to the Association question as to the effect of the reduced personal allocation of clothing coupons on the number to be surrendered for uniform, we have received the following reply from the Board of Trade (via the Staff Side):—

"It is not proposed to make any alteration in the annual surrender rates for essential civilian uniforms. These rates were calculated to represent the saving in wear and tear on other clothes effected by uniform wearing and consequently their relation is to the coupon-value of the basic ration. As the former is not being altered no corresponding adjustment in the uniform rates is expected."

War Emergency Committee.

The May meeting of the War Emergency Committee (P.S.A.) will be held on Thursday the 28th in the month at Walter House, Strand, London.

Staff Side Chairman.

Mr. A. J. Cowherd, Chairman of the Joint Committee (C. and E. Associations), and Vice-Chairman of the Departmental Council, has announced his intention of resigning these positions at the end of June. In spite of the entreaties and arguments of his many friends, up to the time of writing, Mr. Cowherd had shown no signs of altering his decision.

If, as now seems likely, we are to lose his services then the Staff Side will be faced with the problem of finding a successor—a problem made very difficult by the high standard of efficiency set by Mr. Cowherd during long years of valuable, unselfish service.

Customs Fund.

The ballot for the election of Directors resulted in the re-election of the three retiring Directors, Messrs. Chubb, Littler and Quimby.

Members will be disappointed at the failure of the Waterguard candidate, Mr. J. Merron, to secure one of the seats, and this in spite of the splendid effort in many quarters. We can only suggest that at the next election even greater effort will be called for in order that we may once again have a member of the branch on the Directorate.

Mr. T. A. Stuart.

The Service was shocked at the news of the death of Mr. T. A. Stuart, A.P.O., of Folkestone (detached to Liverpool), and learned with horror the tragic details of this sad affair.

We extend to Mrs. Stuart, her daughters and the Stuart family, our sincerest sympathy in this sudden bereavement.

Correspondence

The Editor, "Customs Journal."

Sir,

In reply to "Some Hull-ites" and to other Hull men who may be of the same opinion, may I, in good faith, suggest that had all Hull men maintained touch with the home port news would not be lacking.

There is no reason why the "Customs Journal" should not be the medium of the exchange of news and views of Hull people. I have previously appealed for news, but in vain. Perhaps, "Some Hull-ites," you yourselves would be prepared to act constructively and start the ball rolling by giving me some news from your "remote outpost."

N. S. MANNERS, A.P.O.

The Editor, "Customs Journal."

Sir,

A matter that has concerned me since the outbreak of war is the fact that A.P.O.s are not issued copies of the all-important O circulars. After all, the A.P.O. is the man who does the actual rummage or examination of baggage, the P.O. being present more in a supervisory capacity, so it seems deplorable that the A.P.O. should not have full knowledge of the regulations contained in these orders.

I do not know the position in other parts of the country, but at this port I must go to my P.O. and ask if I may please borrow his instructions, so that I may know a little of the job I hope I am doing!

Admittedly I have never yet been refused, although there is no reason why I shouldn't have been, and in any case, how am I to know they are strictly up to date? The paper shortage can hardly be the reason for this slight on the A.P.O. grade when sheaves of totally useless instructions and amendments on Purchase Tax, O.A. Pensions, War Damage Act, etc., etc., are issued with monotonous regularity, despite the nation-wide campaign for economy.

Let the A.P.O.s receive their proper instructions or, better still, let one station copy be made accessible to all.

Surely it would not be an insurmountable task for the Board to issue the Staff with regulations appertaining only to this department, and to cease forthwith the appalling waste of paper that is to be found in every office.

J.C.M.

Customs & Excise Departmental Whitley Council

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

Prior to the commencement of the business on the agenda, the Chairman referred to the lamented death, after but a few days' illness, of Mr. J. H. Newman, Controller of the Valuation Branch. The Vice-Chairman, Mr. A. J. Cowherd, associated the Staff Side in an expression of regret, and referred to Mr. Newman's earlier service in the Outdoor Department and his association with staffing matters in the Secretaries' Office. Mr. Newman's passing was a loss to the Department and to those who had been privileged to work with him.

MAN-POWER.

(a) **G.O. 32/1941.**—In reply to a Staff Side inquiry regarding the surplus Departmental Clerical Officers in London Port which were available for transfer, the Official Side replied that the numbers had been reported in March to the Treasury, and as War Damage work declined more would be available for absorption elsewhere. A large number were awaiting call-up, and the Ministries of Supply and of Aircraft Production had each taken some members of the grade.

(b) **T.C. 10/1941, paragraphs 2 (i) and (ii).**—The Staff Side said they had already signified their agreement to a large proportion of the suggestions for the elimination of less essential work furnished by the Official Side, and had received on request further information in respect of others. A small number was left for discussion in the Sub-Committee. The Official Side said that a letter was in preparation to give the Staff Side similar information regarding the suggestions put forward by the Staff Side.

(c) **Kennel Committee Report.**—In reply to Staff Side inquiry, the Official Side said that the Ministry of Labour had selected approximately sixty officials for interview for technical commissions in the Forces or technical jobs in Civil Departments, and they were able to assure the Staff Side that the individuals selected would not lose financially. So far as the man-power position was concerned, the Official Side repeated the assurance given at the last Council meeting that men released for this purpose would be regarded as a charge against the Department's total liability.

The Staff Side expressed appreciation of the Official Side's statement.

(d) **Release of Women.**—The Official Side stated that there had been a few more volunteers, and that instructions had already been issued regarding the 1920-21 group.

PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON COLLECTIONS.

The Official Side said that since the last discussion changes at Southampton had absorbed the staff on a 51-hour week. If, however, the two Collections were left separate additional staff might be required at Southampton, and that could be avoided by amalgamation. They had come to the conclusion that the amalgamation must proceed.

The Staff Side referred to their previously expressed opinion that the present time was not appropriate for adjustment of Collections, either in general or in particular, pointing out that in some Collections adjustments opposite to amalgamation appeared to be justified. In the present case, they could not agree to the amalgamation, and the Council recorded disagreement on the item.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER QUESTIONS.

(a) The first item under this head concerned the Staff Side proposals covering the **Effect on Promotion of Re-employment or Deferment of Retirement**, and the Staff Side inquired what effect the issue of E.O.C. 565/42 had had upon the Official Side's consideration of the possibility of dispensing with the services of officials now re-employed or otherwise retained after the normal retirement period. The Official Side said that they understood the circular in question to leave discretion to Heads of Departments as to the retention or otherwise of staff over 60. The Staff

Side was aware of the difficulties of the Department, a large Department, but not expanding. The Official Side had reached the conclusion that the time had come, in the general interest of the Department, to dispense with the services of some of the senior members of the Department, e.g., some officials who had been retired and re-employed, or officials who might be retired under standing superannuation rules.

The Staff Side said that this appeared to be a drastic method of restoring a flow of promotion, and it had no relation to their own proposals for release of staff, after promotion, to other Departments if redundancy existed in the grade to which they had been promoted. The position of the men whose services were to be dispensed with would be one of difficulty, and the Staff Side could not view with equanimity their dispersal altogether from the Public Service.

The Official Side said that the E.O.C. was designed primarily to meet problems arising in Departments which were needing additional staff. For the reasons they had previously indicated, they regarded the scheme proposed by the Staff Side as impracticable, and in the interests of the Department as a whole they felt obliged to take the present step. It was possible that some of the men released might find work in other Departments, and if the men concerned wished it the Official Side would bring their wishes to the attention of the Treasury, though it should not be expected that they would be able to be employed on the same terms as before. Although the Official Side did not propose to dispense with the services of anyone before the date of the next meeting, it was proposed to issue notices to some of the staff concerned.

The item was then readjourned at the request of the Staff Side.

(b) **Vacancies in the Waterguard.**—The Official Side said that the net redundancy of Chief Preventive Officers not required at their present ports was five. The disposal of these men within their own ports was a difficult problem, since where the Customs work had declined the work of the port as a whole, e.g., immigration work, had also declined. So far as removal of men was concerned, the usual Service procedure would operate, i.e., in the absence of volunteers the junior man would be nominated for removal, and equitable treatment would be afforded as between the people in any one port. The Official Side said that opportunity for discussion of the matter informally would be given, and the Council readjourned the item at the request of the Staff Side.

(c) **Upgrading of Temporary Clerks, Grade III.**—The Staff Side said they had received the Official Side's statement promised at the last Council meeting, and at their request the item was readjourned.

(d) **Promotion to the Surveyor Grade.**—Under "Other Business" the Chairman made the following statement:—

"A general announcement has recently been made to the Service about the Surveyors' Examination to be held in 1943 as an experimental measure. You have been informed at the Outdoor Service Sectional Committee and in discussion of the general lines on which we propose to proceed. The questions set at the written qualifying examination will be on the same lines as those set in recent examinations, the intention being to allow an Officer of reasonably good experience to qualify as a result of the experience he has gained of the work of the Department without requiring an intensive course of Departmental Regulations outside that experience. The marking of the papers will be on general lines, that is to say, the candidates' performance will be judged as a whole, and they will be grouped into a few groups, such as A+, A, A-, ; B+, or B, B-. A list of the qualifying candidates marked on these lines will be published.

"The interviews will take place as soon as practicable after the written qualifying examination. We propose to interview Officers of at least fifteen years' service, and, if selected, they will be promoted in order of seniority as vacancies arise: I must add, however, that it is our firm conviction that it is essential, in the interests of the efficiency of the Department, to introduce into the Surveyor Grade, and ultimately into the Controlling Grade, an admix-

ture of younger Officers. To achieve that we intend, if we find some of the junior Officers of less than fifteen years' service have done exceptionally well in the written qualifying examination, to call them for interview at the same time as the others. We should also obtain special reports on these Officers. If the interview and the reports confirm their qualification as suggested by the written examination, we propose to promote them to the Surveyor Grade.

"Eligible candidates on loan or serving with the Forces would be specially considered on the basis of special reports for exemption from a written examination."

The Staff Side said they could only note this statement.

(c) **Common Seniority list for Higher Clerical Officers in Headquarters Offices.**—This item was re-adjourned at the request of the Staff Side.

USE OF CARS ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS ON AND AFTER 1st JULY, 1942.

In reply to Staff Side inquiry, the Official Side said they were unable at present to make any definite statement as to the position of authorised car users in the Department following the imposition of the cut in the basic rationing of petrol. Both the Treasury and the Petroleum Board understood that travelling by motor-car was a material factor affecting man-power in the Departmental organisation, and the Official Side were giving the matter urgent and careful attention. The Staff Side said they trusted that steps would be taken to avoid the withdrawal of cars from use in the service of the Department.

SEIZURE REWARDS.

The Council considered a disagreement reached in the Waterguard Sectional Committee on a Staff Side proposal to adjourn consideration of Official Side proposals to stabilise the rate of rewards payable on seizures of tobacco goods and spirits, the position being subject to review at the end of the war.

The Staff Side stated that within their experience this was the first occasion in which a disagreement had been reached on a Staff Side proposal for an adjournment. They knew this had occurred in the past in connection with Official Side proposals for adjournment, but the present occurrence was not reasonable in view of the brevity of notice to the Staff Side of the Committee. The Official Side proposal in the reference to the Waterguard Sectional Committee betokened a reduction in the remuneration receipts of the Waterguard personnel and rewards had been previously accepted as part of the remuneration of that personnel. In view of the financial interest involved in the proposal, the insistence on an immediate decision did not appear to be fair treatment. The present reward calculation followed on discussions in 1936, when it was agreed that rewards should be based in relation to duty, but a disagreement was recorded as to the factor of relationship. The Staff Side considered their offer of 40s. per lb. (tobacco goods) was a reasonable compromise—47s. 6d. would be more appropriate—but 40s. was more reasonable than the 36s. indicated in the Official Side's proposal.

The Official Side said that they regarded the situation which had developed as serious and affecting the good repute of the Waterguard Service and the Department. They were not raising at this stage a question of the principle of rewards. The fact that had to be faced was that the number of seizures of tobacco had doubled and the amount of the rewards thereon had been quadrupled. It could not be maintained that the difficulty of the work had been doubled. The reward system was producing these results because the basis of calculation was attached to figures of duty which were being increased for reasons that had nothing to do with the question of the work involved in safeguarding the revenue. Criticism on these grounds would be difficult to answer.

It was true that the formal notice of the precise terms of the proposal had been short, but its purport had been communicated to the Committee's Staff Side two months before the Sectional Committee had been called. The Official Side said that, strictly speaking, the adjustment should have been calculated on the last pre-war Budget rates of duty, but as the system had been allowed to run for some time they were content to base it on a stabilisation of 36s. per lb. Because of the reasons of policy in the

proposal the Official Side are not prepared to depart from that figure.

The Staff Side said that the informal nature of the early communication of the purport of the proposals had precluded the necessary general circulation, and they referred again to the argument advanced in the Arbitration Court against a former Staff Side salary claim for Waterguard Grades that the receipt of rewards was regarded as part of the emoluments of certain members of those Grades. The reduction in income resulting from the new proposal was drastic, and the decision of the Official Side would be received with great disappointment and even resentment in the Waterguard Service.

The Council confirmed the disagreement as defined above, and recorded disagreement on the Official Side proposal contained in the reference to the Sectional Committee.

In reply to inquiry, the Official Side stated that the new rates mentioned in the proposal would operate in respect of rewards on seizures made on and after 1st April, 1942. Certain minor points still remained for discussion in the Committee.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Local staffing and unit agreements from Brighton, Grimsby and Norwich Collections were carried, one local decision was regarded as ultra vires, one was referred back for treatment on a temporary basis, and two others were adjourned.

Agreements from the Officer Grade Committee were approved covering payment of certain travelling expenses for abnormal attendances arising from the war and a time addition, in Units Stations, of one-sixth in lieu of one-seventh for attendances necessarily given between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The issue as a measure of safety of wooden soled clogs to certain Launch Service ratings was also approved.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 27th May, 1942.

British Hospitals Contributory Schemes Assoc.

Civil Servants and Government Employees' Hospital Scheme


Civil Servants are invited to consider the advantages of the above-named Hospitals Scheme, which enjoys the facilities authorised by Treasury Circular dated 4th June, 1938, relating to the collection of hospital contributions by deductions from pay.

This Scheme operates throughout the entire country and is managed by a Joint Committee, comprising representatives of the National Staff Side of the Civil Service and the British Hospitals Contributory Schemes Association. The services of no fewer than 150 Hospital Contributory Schemes situated in almost every large town throughout the country, with an annual income of £5,000,000 and a membership of 10 million contributors, are placed at the disposal of contributors.

Membership of the Civil Service and Government Employees' Hospital scheme provides complete freedom from any investigation of the contributors' financial circumstances and entire freedom from payment on admission to any Voluntary Hospital. The contribution varies from 3d. to 5s. per week, according to the locality, and this entitles the contributor, his wife and dependent children to free service in any Voluntary Hospital.

Is this Scheme in Operation at your Place of Employment? If not, you are cordially invited to communicate with the Hon. Secretary:—

SYDNEY LAMB, M.B.E.
British Hospitals Contributory Schemes Assn.,
142, Edmund Street, Birmingham, 3.



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THE CUSTOMS FUND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting of the Subscribers to the Customs Annuity and Benevolent Fund, Incorporated, was held at City Gate House, Finsbury Square, on Thursday, April 23rd, at 5 p.m. Mr. W. Henderson, O.B.E., the President, was in the chair.

Gentlemen,—I have to present to you this evening, on behalf of the Directors, the 126th Annual Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts of the Customs Fund.

They show, I think, in all the circumstances, a very satisfactory state of affairs. For reasons which I will explain in due course, we have had to deny ourselves the pleasure of declaring a bonus to subscribers. You will remember that I have found it necessary to sound notes of warning on this subject at each of the last two of these Annual Meetings and to point out that the investment of most of our surplus funds in 3 per cent. Government Stock, combined with the temporary loss of income from freehold ground rents, and, on top of both, an abnormally high level of taxation, must necessarily have an adverse effect on distributable profits.

This year, the Assurance Fund has earned the satisfactory rate of £5 7s. 8d. per cent. gross and £3 16s. 7d. per cent. after deduction of tax. The Fund's valuation rate, that is the rate of interest which the Actuary assumes when he calculates, in the light of our probable rate of earning, over a long future, the amount which must be retained to provide for liabilities in respect of claims under insurances, has stood at 3 per cent. for many years. The difference between this rate and the net rate of interest actually earned furnishes, to a large extent, the profit which, in normal conditions, is available for distribution by way of bonuses. Absolute security for the fulfilment of all obligations must naturally be our first consideration, and must take precedence over any question of such a distribution. This is axiomatic, and in order to maintain such security it was decided, in consultation with the Actuary, that the Valuation Rate must be reduced to 2½ per cent. for the current valuation. It will be clear, I think, to all of you that the combined result of lower gross yields, due to investment in 3 per cent. stock and increased taxation, made this the wise course—indeed, the only possible course—to pursue. It has had the effect of absorbing approximately £30,000 which otherwise would have been available for distribution under more normal conditions. Before I leave this important subject I should like to point out that, by reducing the valuation rate to 2½ per cent., we hope to preserve a substantial part of the margin which has previously existed between the actual net yield and the valuation rate and therefore provide a source of future bonus awards.

Turning to the Assurance Fund Accounts, you will notice that we have brought into the Fund £5,000 from Subsidiary Businesses, making a total from this source of £9,000 for the triennium. In view of war conditions and the high rate of income tax, this must be regarded as a very satisfactory return from the subsidiary businesses.

The Life Losses during the year accounted for £34,567—about £3,000 lower than last year, and, despite the war, quite a normal figure.

The Expenses of Management include, in the incidental expenses, the extra costs due to maintaining at Royston the deeds and securities and a part of the Fund staff.

You will notice in the Assurance Fund Account an item of £20,000 carried to the Reserve Fund in the Balance Sheet and then written off the Securities. This amount has, in fact, been written off the Freehold Ground Rents which previously stood at £110,237.

As I mentioned last year, a considerable part of the Fund's holding of ground rents has suffered damage to an extent which renders that part of the assets non-revenue-producing; and I am afraid we must conclude that there is every prospect of this state of affairs continuing for some years—at least until rebuilding can commence. The leases have been disclaimed by the tenants, and the Fund now owns vacant non-productive land. There is every reason to believe that eventually this asset will recover its original asset value. But, until such times come, your

Directors deemed it prudent to write down the capital value by £20,000.

The only other item in the Assurance Fund Account which seems to call for special mention is the contribution under the War Damage Act, amounting to £1,642. This is, of course, an insurance premium covering our interest in ground rents and the mortgaged properties, which stands at approximately £850,000—not an unreasonable rate of insurance, but at the same time, of course, an added expense.

The Trust Funds, you will notice, have increased by £14,000, and now stand at £175,282. These Funds represent, as you are aware, the proceeds of Fund insurances, and provide an income for the dependants of deceased subscribers who choose this form of investment. The rate of interest paid at present is 4 per cent., and in view of the satisfactory gross interest yield on the general funds for last year, your Directors are pleased to be able to announce that this rate of interest will be continued during the current year.

I think I have already covered most of the important points arising on or out of the Balance Sheet. The total assets, you will see, are now £1,071,584, an increase of £16,000 over last year, despite the writing down of the ground rents. This is indicative, I think, of the basic soundness of the Fund and of its steady growth. The Stock Exchange Securities show an increase of £53,000 over last year's figures, due entirely to the investment of all surplus money available during the year after providing for the reduced requirements of subscribers for house-purchase advances, in 3 per cent. War Stock. The probable effect of this on our future income I have already referred to in connection with the reduction in the Valuation Rate.

The Reserve Fund remains at the figure of £30,000, to which it was increased last year. The Stock Exchange Securities stand at their cost price, which is, in fact, some £4,000 lower than middle market price on 5th January, 1942. These reserves, together with the steps already taken by reducing the Valuation Rate and writing down the Ground Rents, have absorbed practically the whole of the profits, which would have constituted a surplus available for distribution had not war conditions rendered these steps essential. To avoid undue hardship on insurances which become claims during the current year, however, they will be paid interim bonuses at one-half the cash allotment made in 1939—a generous bonus year.

That, Gentlemen, concludes my survey of the Fund's activities and the results of the past year's working—indeed, of the past three years. They have been difficult years—years of war. There have been problems; there have been anxieties. A great deal of extra work has necessarily fallen on the staff. I am glad to testify that it has in all cases been willingly met with the utmost loyalty and efficiency. Your Directors have not escaped their due share of the burden; it is not, perhaps, for me to say in what fashion it has been borne. The decision not to increase our liabilities by declaring bonus awards this year, which naturally we all regretted having to make, was arrived at only after many long and anxious consultations. The decision was unanimous. I am quite sure it was the right decision—in fact, in all the circumstances, it was the unavoidable decision.

I think on the whole survey I am entitled to say, in conclusion, that the decisions we have made, and the measures we have taken are such that we can all face the still uncertain future with sober confidence.

Mr. Andrews said that he was somewhat perturbed about the passing of the bonus and the writing down of the ground rents, and that he would also like to see more new subscribers to the Fund.

Dr. Mackie said that his only criticism was that the bonus ought to have been passed in 1939 as well as in 1942. He disagreed entirely with Mr. Andrews, and said that the reduction in the valuation rate and the writing down of the ground rents were two very sound steps. He had been a subscriber for over 50 years, and he was very well satisfied indeed with the balance sheet, and congratulated the Directors on it.

Mr. Calvert asked if he could be informed if other British Life Offices had declared bonuses during the war period.

At the President's invitation, Mr. Maudling, Actuary to the Fund, informed the meeting that, with one or two exceptions, no office had declared a general bonus distribution, but were paying interim bonuses in the same manner as the Fund, but at a rather lower rate.

The President, in reply to the discussion, said that he disagreed entirely with Mr. Andrews' gloomy view of the position of the Fund. On the contrary, the Fund's position was entirely sound. He corrected Mr. Andrews' statement concerning the Freehold Ground Rents, and said that in every case where leases had been disclaimed the lessees were fully entitled to do so under the law, and the effect of this was that the leases so disclaimed were not now producing any revenue.

The President then referred to the nominations for the office of Auditor and Directors. Only one nomination having been received for the office of Auditor, he declared Frederick William Loveless duly appointed.

Referring to the nominations for the Directorate, he pointed out there were six candidates for three vacancies, and although he was very reluctant indeed to suggest that any candidates should withdraw, he felt that he must point out that the necessity for a postal ballot in war-time was something to be deprecated. He invited the candidates and their supporters to consider this position.

Mr. Chase said that he considered it was to the benefit of the Fund to have an inflow of new men on the Directorate.

Mr. Powell, speaking for Mr. Merron, said he considered a Waterguard representative should be on the Board of the Fund.

Mr. Williams stated that he did not claim to represent any particular section of the Department, but rather subscribers as a whole.

The President then stated that since no nominations had been withdrawn that a postal ballot would take place. The ballot-papers would be issued on April 30th, and the poll would close at 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 7th.

A vote of thanks by Mr. Morton to the President concluded the proceedings.

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

The quarterly meeting of the Executive Committee took place in the Conference Room, City Gate House, on Tuesday, the 7th of April, the Chair being occupied by Mr. J. H. Newman, Vice-President.

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed, and the Hon. Secretary's financial statement was adopted.

Twelve new members were elected, comprising three Officers and nine Clerical Officers.

Applications were considered for renewal of grants, coming from sixteen widows and one wife. The Committee voted eight grants of £20, five grants of £15, and one grant of £10 to the widows. The wife was granted £20 (R.27). One application was refused, under present circumstances, and another case deferred for further information. As regards new applications, four concerned children, and four were from widows, on their own account. Grants were made as follows:—

1 family with 3 children	—£40 per annum.
1 " " 2 " "	£30 " "
1 " " 1 child	£20 " "
1 " " 1 " "	£20 " "

One widow was voted £20, one widow £15. Two applications from widows were refused in present circumstances.

Half-yearly reports on welfare of the children receiving benefits were satisfactory. The visitors found that all the children were being well-cared for and were receiving proper education.

The draft of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year was examined and passed. Authority was given for the printing and circulation of the Report to members, and for the time and place of the Annual General Meeting. The meeting will be held on Monday, 15th June, at 4 p.m., in the Conference Room, City Gate House, Finsbury Square, E.C.

Members loaned to other Departments have been informed already, that as from 31st March, they must make their own arrangements for transmitting their annual subscription to the Fund, owing to the Treasury decision. They will also have received an invitation from the Hon. Secretary to remit their annual subscription for 1942 in one amount to the Hon. Treasurer, 17 Room, Custom House, E.C.3. This will save much labour and also expense in postage and paper. A Postal Order, Cheque, or a Banker's Order may be used. In the latter alternative please note that the Fund's bankers are The Midland Bank, Ltd., Eastcheap Branch, London, E.C.3.

"SOLD"

The "Pelagic" was coming home.

It was twenty-five years since she had gone down the slips, the pride of the Clydeside yard which had built her. Now her useful days were over and she was on her way back up the Clyde for the last time to the breaker's yard.

From her after-mast a pennant twenty-four yards long streamed out; at the foremast head fluttered the house-flag of a famous line, and right aft she proudly displayed the Red Ensign. Thus in all her glory she passed up river, seen by few, acclaimed by none; her only greetings were the curtseying of innumerable derricks along the line of docks.

Three weeks later the first sale of fittings was advertised. The main item was one hundred wardrobes from the first-class staterooms. They were good stuff, for the "Pelagic" had been built in the days when the best of timber was available. Messrs. Shipscrapers, Ltd., with a view to attracting buyers, set up one specimen wardrobe in the showroom.

Enquiries came in thick and fast, and the sample wardrobe was eagerly inspected. The buyers were, without exception, astonished and delighted at the low figure asked, and the lots were quickly disposed of to one hundred satisfied householders.

They were satisfied, that is, until the wardrobes were eventually received in one hundred different homes. Then incensed housewives discovered that the wardrobes of the "Pelagic," in common with those usually supplied to ships, suffered a grave defect in the home.

To be a perfect piece of domestic furniture they lacked only one thing—a back.

GEORGE R. STOCKS.

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Life Assurance

£100 to £3,000

to members of the

Customs and Excise Service Only.

Cost of an Insurance for £100 under Table B.

Age 25 ... 3/6 per month

" 30 ... 4/- " "

" 35 ... 4/8 " "

Premiums are deducted from salary.

For Proposal Forms and Books of Tables
apply to :

F. T. G. HARRIS, Secretary,
Customs Fund (Temporary Address) : Beeches,
Royston, Herts.

The Lads o' London

In last month's "Journal" I had the pleasure of congratulating upon his promotion our inimitable colleague and friend, Flying-Officer Alec. Gerrie, R.A.F., and now word has been received that he is missing. The news came as a profound shock to me and to all of his friends in the Department. He participated in the daylight raid over Augsburg in the latter part of April and failed to return. His father said that there may be a possibility of a forced landing. Alec. is a pilot and has been flying bombers for some months past. Our thoughts go out to his family during this trying time, and we all sincerely hope that he is safe and well. I had hoped to have given some good news of Joe Thompson, who is in Burma, but a letter from his mother contained the information that she has not heard from him since the 15th of February last, and I would that all of you remember her in your thoughts, and Joe, too, during this period of anxious waiting. In his last letter home he told of the heat and other problems that beset the white man out there, but it was good to note that his health was sound. Tidings of his safety are awaited.

Max Dunstone has again provided me with a spot of violet ink and said he is getting used to the Navy. "In fact," he said, "it is quite pleasant trotting about the ocean these days." I've noticed that the weather has been warm lately. Max in his letter said that Ben Battle had written to him, and he is now engaged in teaching disabled men new careers somewhere in Somerset. Truly an honourable occupation, and one which commends itself to all of us, as we can visualise Ben helping to instil into the minds and lives of those poor men a new zest for living. Carry on the good work, Ben. Max concluded his letter by telling me that he is a journalist—professional, too!

There is another addition to the ranks of the Fleet Air Arm in the person of Jim Sherlock. Stationed at Larne since he was sent from London on detached duty, he "joined up" on 7th March last. Perhaps he will contact Jim Sutton, who is also at St. Vincent.

Dick Jones called into the King George Dock office the other day, and apparently the Army is fattening him up. You'll have to get the Board's tailor to run the tape over you again after the war, Dick. What about spending 2½d. and sending me a line? 'Tis always pleasant to receive letters from the chaps overseas, and an airgraph arrived from Jim Dunn, in which he informed me that he has been promoted to corporal, and said that he now receives the "C.J.s" regularly and passes them on to another Waterguard chappie in his regiment. I wonder who is the chap concerned! Will find out and let his colleagues in his home port know. Jim says football still goes down well even in that part of the world—the Libyan Desert. Harry Newlyn has now gone overseas, and as soon as he lets me know of his whereabouts it can be published.

An Army officer colleague called at the Stage here on the 7th May, but unfortunately I was out, and upon my return he was nowhere to be found. His wife was with him, and apparently the Lieutenant was due to embark for overseas service. If the wife or other relatives of the officer concerned reads these notes, will she or they please communicate with me in Liverpool? Jack Sides met Freddie Kippin up North and mentioned that Freddie has transferred to the Royal Marines with the rank of Lieutenant. Let me know all about it, Freddie, please. One has to apologise for describing as a Commander our friend Jack; he is a Coder. Yes, Jack, it was a printer's error. Even the "Super" raised the query in Room 11 as to whether you had received sudden promotion.

Poor old Fred Harvey is having a tough time of it trying to teach farmers' boys, printers, a dirt-track rider, and a dustman, etc., all about the mysteries of searchlight work, and added they just can't absorb it all. Still very much near home in Essex, he said there is talk of substituting the men by members of the A.T.S. Perhaps he will have an easier and far more pleasant time instructing these young ladies. Elated at the fact, too, of being near to his home is George Pearce, who left Huddersfield in February last for somewhere in the Home Counties. Frank Dowdell and George had a lengthy 'phone conversation some short time ago, and

they have arranged to meet soon. Now in the same Army Division, it would appear that they never met whilst together in the Waterguard. Jack Bushell went to Plymouth for a senior N.C.O.'s course and is awaiting the result with some trepidation. During his stay there he visited the Plymouth staff, and received a warm welcome. By the way, Plymouth, I had the pleasure of meeting your Harry Lane on an outward-bound trooper lately, looking very well in R.A.F. uniform, although somewhat sad at the prospect of leaving the old country. "Jack Tar" John Griffin has expressed a desire to retain his hammock after the war.

It has now been established that Ken Watson met his death in Kalamata in Greece on the 17th of April, 1941. He did not suffer, the end was swift.

Mr. A. G. Vigeon, P.O., has offered his home as an "open house." His address is: 27, Park Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent. Forces please note this address. My grateful thanks are extended to Mr. Vigeon. Any more offers, please?

Mr. "Bo" Blake, P.O., has arrived in Liverpool from London, and Mr. Les Ray, P.O., has returned home for domestic reasons. In the neighbouring part of Runcorn Mr. "Baron" Field, late of London, and now of Cowes, has arrived to fill the place vacated by Roger Withey, and who knows, the dart team may get going again with Messrs. Boodle, Cozens, Holden, Howard and Lynch, etc., to form the team, with the "Baron" once again as the skipper. John Scott, who is on D.D. at Methil, has taken unto himself a wife. Best wishes are extended to them.

A wedding of Waterguard interest took place last month at Woking between Laurie Fozard, A.P.O., who is a wireless operator on H.M.S. Furious, the aircraft carrier, and a daughter of Harry Gatward, A.P.O., of Victoria Dock. We wish them all the very best in their married life. Harry is, I note, doing his bit in the Home Guard. Should like to see my old pal Teddy Precious as your sergeant, Harry.

Bill Farmer wrote last week and said that there is plenty of work to do in Londonderry.

The information has been received with regret of the enforced retirement through ill-health of Bill Turnbull. We hope that his health will improve considerably, and that once again he will be able to render loyal service elsewhere. His address can be had from me upon application.

The grand scheme as envisaged by Mr. Gregory Chase, of Room 15, in "Tower Hill and the Customs," should commend itself to those who are in authority, to do something in the matter. Customs and Excise Social and Association activities should be directed towards that end as part of their post-war planning. A Customs and Excise Sports ground, too, would be ideal, and if the Directors of the "Customs Fund" are looking for a safe investment for some of the funds at their disposal, they could not do better than "sink a few thousand" to enable the Customs and Excise Sports Club to purchase and equip a ground for the use of the staff, such as the one that the members of the sister department, i.e., The Inland Revenue, enjoy at Grove Park. The interest could be repaid each year. The scheme is worth thinking about.

Let's hear from you then.

Till the Lights o' London shine again.

R. J. L.

LONDON OFFICERS SERVING IN H.M. FORCES

(Continued from pages 135 and 149, vol. 33.)

Name.	Rank.	Branch of Forces in which Serving.
Benson, W. R. . .	Private . .	H.Q., 4th Indian Corps.
Colan, A. O. . .	Observer . .	Royal Air Forces.
Hoar, J. R. . .	Lieutenant	Hampshire Regiment.
Kippin, F. J. . .	Lieutenant . .	Royal Marines.
Pearce, W. T. . .	O.S. . .	Royal Navy.
Penfold, P. G. . .	Flying Cadet	Royal Air Force.
Sherlock, J. D. . .	Naval Airman Cadet	Royal Navy (Fleet Air Arm).
Smallwood, F. W.	A/C.2 . .	Royal Air Force.
Walker, L. J. . .	Observer . .	Royal Air Force.
Withey, R. A. F.	A/C.2 . .	Royal Air Force.

Southampton Notes

Many letters this month, much good news and some sad news. The sad news is that Davy Youdeil is reported missing in the Far East, and coupled with the lack of news of Arnold Bateman, it is causing concern and anxiety at this end. If the hopes and wishes of their one hundred Southampton colleagues are granted, then indeed will sadness give way to gladness.

Such news of Davy, coming immediately after the receipt of his first overseas letter, was a shock to us all. May these pages have the opportunity of giving you the news we all desire so keenly of both of these gallant lads.

We were looking forward to reporting another small reunion this month, but it must be postponed, as Ron Greenhaigh, busy on Coastal Command operations, had his April leave cancelled. He is very well, getting along in good style, and sends you his remembrance. Other R.A.F. news is ours from Dudley Heat, George Gray and Les Twentyman, and it is first class. Dudley may be home by the time this reaches the Watch-house or Service Station, as he has completed his overseas training and, all being well, will have flown the Atlantic from West to East, a fitting climax to months of hard endeavour. We look forward to seeing you, Dudley boy, complete with stripes, very soon, and to hearing more of the story so well pictured by your recent letter.

George Gray has commenced training in the approved style, and his unstinted admiration for the R.A.F. and its methods is obvious from his closing opinion, i.e., "this life is wizard." We are glad to know this, and we reciprocate your good wishes, George.

"Twenty" sat for his "wings" final towards the end of February, so we should have the result we anticipate in time for the next issue. Meanwhile, all goes well with him (as we had a cable early in May), and after completing his course with the "Heavies," he is now tackling the "Fighter" types. Good luck, "Twenty."

The R.A.F. will probably be giving Jack Welsh a welcome as I write this, because we understand that Bill Martin has booked a single ticket to Maryport this week-end. Maybe, we shall have confirmation from Jack for the next issue.

Other Forces news is that of Alan Hobbs proceeding overseas, and presumably Mark Flynn (London); of Joe, still A.I. and made more cheery by the receipt of mail after seven months' delay; of Arthur Cheney, recently in the company of Jimmy Agnew, and keeping very fit; and of Steve, now on a course in the Metropolis, and liking the life. Maybe I have been misinformed previously as to the merits of Bloomsbury!

May Day provided a pleasant surprise by the arrival in Manchester of Jack Langford, but only for a few hours. He had to appear at the local Police Court, and I must say he gave a very lucid display in the "box," thereby evoking tribute from the Magistrate, who imposed D.V.D. upon four offenders. Jack seems to have hit the trail right enough at Holyhead, and has also been able to get occasional Soccer games there. I have conveyed your congratulations to him and to Mrs. Langford, for they are now proud parents of a bonny daughter.

The lads at home will be interested to hear of the well-being of Tom Ford, at Briton Ferry, and of the exiles North and North-West.

Home news remains constant, and recent air activity has caused no harm to those whom you know. Current topics are: Firewatching, Gardening and Detached Duty, although the latter is now a poor third, notice that!

We are glad to hear of our Launch Skipper, Joe Price, returning to duty, especially as he brought the proud news of the D.F.M. award to one of his sons.

I hope to get more home news direct for the June issue, thanks to a spell of leave before the next sunset.

There has been a swift reaction to Home Guard enlistment in the North-West, and there will be no string left to pull soon!

Those responsible for "C.J." despatch will be glad to know of the grateful reception accorded to the Journals, as mentioned in letter after letter, by our lads in the U.S.A., Middle East, South Africa, India, and on the high seas. A constant link indeed. Keep it going.

Cheerio, Forces!

L.B.

Liverpool District Meeting

Held at the Common Hall, Hackins Hey, on the 28th April, 1942. Mr. Hyland was in the chair, and at 5.15 p.m. the minutes of the last meeting were read. Mr. Clayson proposed the adoption of the minutes, and Mr. Dinsdale seconded.

Mr. Neill, District Secretary, informed the meeting that the question of the payment of overtime on a Monday had been adjourned on the Local Joint Committee, but that the Collector had said that any officer requiring his overtime on a Tuesday could have it by making the necessary arrangements to have his name placed on the Dale Street Form 203. After some discussion on this point, Mr. Dinsdale (seconded by Mr. W. C. Hughes) proposed "that the Collector's offer of payment of overtime where required on Tuesday, be accepted."

Mr. R. G. Roberts (seconded by Mr. Donnelly) moved an amendment "That Whitley representatives be instructed to press for general payment of overtime on Tuesday, and that all appearance sheets and Forms 201 be transmitted to the Landing Stage by the officer taking the tidal sheets, and the whole be checked and certified by the C.P.O. at the Stage or other C.P.O. designated for the purpose." The amendment was carried amidst many appraising remarks.

The District Secretary read a letter from the General Secretary informing the staff of a proposed reduction in Seizure Rewards. After some discussion, it was agreed to adjourn this item to "Other business."

Mr. Neill then informed the meeting that the Waterguard Superintendent hoped shortly to be able to withdraw the circular concerning the additional copy of the Inward Clearing Bill. Mr. Clayson (seconded by Mr. Morrissey) proposed "That the matter be left in the hands of the Staff representatives, and that if an assurance is given that the circular will be withdrawn, together with a date, the Staff will be satisfied." The point was carried.

Regarding the employment of Preventive Officers on patrol at the Landing Stage, Mr. Kemp opened the discussion by saying that such employment was absolutely superfluous, as owing to the change in the position of Assistant Preventive Officers being called up for military service, he considered that there were sufficient A.P.O.s to perform patrol duty. A fair amount of discussion took place, and it soon became apparent that the main objection was the actual patrolling of the Landing Stage. Ultimately Mr. Kemp (seconded by Mr. W. T. Jones) proposed, "That the Preventive Officers now known as Patrol Officers be called Control Officers, and be relieved of patrolling at the Landing Stage." The proposal was carried unanimously.

Mr. Pollock further proposed, "That after 4 p.m. the now known Patrol Officer be accompanied by another officer." The point was defeated.

Regarding Rummage duty after 6 p.m., Mr. Neill explained that this item was placed on the agenda at the request of Mr. Henry, who was not present at this meeting. The Secretary added that the whole trouble was the difficulty of getting the last conveyance home after completing the 2/10 p.m. watch. However, he had had an assurance from the Waterguard Surveyor that any officer could catch the last conveyance home, and that the whole question of 2/10 p.m. watches would be borne in mind in the light of circumstances which may arise. It was agreed to leave the whole matter in the hands of the District Secretary.

Mr. Shaw then proposed "That this meeting put forward the proposal that War Bonus be put on the basis of family allowances." Mr. Porter seconded, and the motion was carried. It was further proposed that family allowances be pressed for irrespective of war-time conditions. The motion, proposed by Mr. W. J. Lee, seconded by Mr. Cowles, was carried. Mr. Shaw then proposed, "That in view of official action in recent disciplinary cases, the Staff Side take steps to see that the procedure as laid down in the relevant paragraphs of General Staff Rules be carried out, and that alleged offenders be cautioned." Seconded by Mr. Dinsdale, the motion was carried.

Regarding the supply of matches for official use, the District Secretary stated that matches could be obtained by

croving for them in the usual manner. The item concerning the reduction of secretaries' honoraria was adjourned at the request of Mr. Shaw. The item concerning the services of Waterguard personnel in the war effort was referred to the Man-Power Sub-Committee.

Under the heading of Other business, Mr. W. C. Hughes (seconded by Mr. Lee) proposed "That this meeting of the Liverpool Branch of the Preventive Staff Association wishes to place on record an energetic protest against the inordinate delay in the payment of seizure rewards in the Liverpool Collection. Further, the meeting instructs its representatives to raise the matter on the Local Whitley Committee, informing them of the terms of this resolution, and requesting that immediate steps be taken to bring reward payments up to date, as laid down in the standing regulations; also that instructions be issued to effectively ensure such payments being kept up to date in future." The resolution was carried.

Mr. Clayson then read a circular from Headquarters, stating that it was proposed to hold the Annual Conference during the first half of the year, and that it was suggested that there should be no ballot for representatives, but that each district should send a representative from each grade. Some discussion ensued on this point, and eventually Mr. Neill proposed "That a general ballot be held." Mr. Clayson seconded, and the motion was carried.

The final proposition was by Mr. Clayson, seconded by Mr. W. C. Hughes, and was thus stated: "That the present mode of payment of seizure rewards be continued." The motion was carried.

This brought the meeting to a close at 7.30 p.m., with the usual vote of thanks to the Chairman, Mr. Hyland.

E.G.H.

"Sunderland Calling"

Hello, Forces!

News is now to hand of another member of the silent Navy, Stan Gill having reported fit and well, he is evidently in home water, or was when he wrote. As usual he writes a cheery letter, and is looking forward to "Der Tag" when all is quiet. So are we, Stan.

The "Big Boy" dropped in on a surprise visit. He is very fit and well, still on the old job with the Rescue squad. He gets plenty of fun and excitement, though he reported things being quieter at present. I had a very pleasant hour with him. Come again, Eddie, you're ever welcome.

Jack Gaston, now P./Officer, is or was at home on leave, having returned from America a fully-fledged Fighter Pilot. We are still hoping for a visit, Jack, there's a Royal Welcome for you. Keep smiling and that tail up.

News of his passing through a certain port on his way home was sent me post haste from another old colleague, whose movements and letters are always welcome. Thanks, James, I wonder if you can still drive a steam roller, or was it a tram car?

Brian Horn paid a brief visit to the office, when I was missing. I seem to be always missing when he calls. He has had a brief spell in hospital, and was home on a spot of sick leave. We hope you are fully recovered by now, Brian. Don't keep us so long for news this time. Keep smiling, lad.

Charlie Scarfe paid us a visit, the last for some time to come, alas! He was on embarkation leave. Well, judging by the news, you will be getting that spot of action you wanted, Charles. He is very fit and well, and is of the opinion that the next five years will be the worst. We all wish you a speedy and safe return, Charles, and "Good Scouting."

Our exiles have all reported this month. George Simmons is settled at Ardrossan, having been joined by the better half for a spell. He reports an interesting and varied assortment of work, and that things are fairly quiet up there.

The Bos'un also has fallen on his feet. He was met on arrival by Jimmy Agnew, who soon had him fixed up with dugs.

Bill Sutton reports all O.K. Having settled down to life at Longhope, the job being varied and interesting. Traveling is the bug bear, and from all accounts travelling is tough. Another peculiar thing is, he is stationed at Port A, lives at Port B, and then works at Port C. Nope, it isn't a Chinese Puzzle.

Frank Wilkinson has retired from the Service after

having completed some 22 years with the Launch Service, and some 50 years' service in the Navy and Launch services. He is hale and hearty and loth to go. I hear there is to be a presentation to him.

In spite of all jerry says and claims, Forces, our flag still flies high and the old shack stands firm.

Good luck to you all, and a speedy and safe return to the fold.

Cheerio, Forces. Over to you, Over.

O. H. L.

Liverpool Notes

I was talking to a major recently. We do talk occasionally to people about non-Service matters, even when on duty, and hope that this is not that vaguely defined mortal sin, "fraternising." This major was a typical soldier, to whom, as a private in the Home Guard (we have many more than L.B. mentioned in his note, e.g., Private Brownlow, who scored a bull's eye on the target of the fellow next to him, Private Donnan, already passed for the Fleet Air Arm) I showed due deference. He told me how his wife and kids were blown to bits in London last year, and made me feel ashamed of how slight material loss had so occupied myself. He told me what our soldiers suffered in Libya, and added, "Anything you can send them, the merest word, will be appreciated. If you only tell them how our Maggie was nearly run over, these men daily facing fearsome crises will be delighted; your scribble will be passed round hundreds." So if you can send anyone you know in Libya or elsewhere—even in this country there are some very lonely sites—a letter, do so. I will say nothing about sending them anything else, for I have said I'll make no more appeals for the Comforts Fund. But if you only knew what good had been done by this enterprise, involving every section of the department, you could not, except through carelessness, forget the monthly tanner. Are the various station collectors doing what they can? And—are the lads themselves helping us by sending us their addresses? They get their "Journals," we know from the following airgraph letter from J. Rankmore (Writer), 36 Mess, H.M.S. "Woolwich," c/o G.P.O., London: "I have just received the "Customs Journal" for January, 1942. . . . It is two years three months since I left those happy days on the Landing Stage, and sometimes it seems a lifetime." He goes on to say how much the "Journal" (which really has shown a very high literary standard just lately) interests him, especially the A.P.O. stripe controversy, of which he says, "naval officers are wearing only half their gold bands upon their sleeves these days, and this must constitute quite a saving in braid. Maybe a similar half gold band for the A.P.O. would meet the occasion, both in the interest of economy and the status of the men." Stripe or no stripe, he hopes to be back in the job this year. "I have almost started to mark the days off on the calendar. . . . I guess we can last out one day longer than the Huns, "Ities" or Japs, and it is that extra day that is going to do the trick. . . . The Empire troops that I have come in contact with are a fine body of men, and even if our democracy seems cock-eyed, one cannot help feeling proud of being British. I HOPE WE GET THE CHANCE THIS YEAR OF STRIKING THE FINAL BLOW FOR VICTORY." From this wonderful note I must descend for the benefit of the Light o' London and other luminaries to one other phrase in this amazingly compressed letter: "I have seen a number of ports since I left England, in different climates, and with varying waterfronts, but nothing as yet has come up to the Liverpool system." Write again, Jack, and any other soldier, sailor or airman from our mob. Know, in very bad conditions, that many of us are trying to do something. And remember that you are still members of the Association, and can send resolutions for the forthcoming Conference or express opinions on motions from us stay-at-homes. One member named in the "Journal" I should like very much to hear from, though he was never in this port, and I have not seen him for years—Lieutenant Basil Tunstead. If he or anyone else writes to me or E.G.H., we'll be most pleased. And if there's anything, within limits, wanted, we'll send it on. We hoped at the recent well-conducted meeting at the Common Hall to bring up the whole subject of the Comforts Fund, but there were too many other topics. C.F.S.

Tyne Topics

In Africa, I hear, one thumps a little on a queer sort of drum and hey! presto!—Marconi is put to shame. Will someone out that way kindly bring back one such drum, complete with book of instructions? It would be the ideal present for a "Customs Journal" correspondent!

From orthodox sources, however, I have gathered that our six Navy lads are fit and well. Frank Cox is in Scotland, tapping a key instead of panels. Ernie Elliott was in Shields for a few days not so long ago. Jock McCarthy, now a Leading Coder, paid a flying visit to the Tyne recently. Before that, he was in Iceland. Jock Ness was very warm in February—but fit enough to pay football for his ship. We owe him thanks for his airgraph. George Wilkes is doing, intensively, something mysterious in radio. He is still in the Tyne area. Tug Wilson was growling about the heat before Xmas—perhaps he'll bring a drum?

Our Army representative, Ronnie Stephenson, was here a short time ago "cleared for foreign." I don't know whether he had an issue, but I hear that his orders have been changed.

The R.A.F. contingent, Fred Chinnery and Rockie Marsden, are still in the U.K. Fred is in Scotland, and Rockie, who aspires *per ardua ad astra*, near the Metropolis.

Our best wishes to you all, amigos; if you will drop me a line I will pass it on to local watch-houses.

The same applies to our colleagues on detached duties—all thirteen of 'em! I hope to have news of them for the June "Customs Journal."
L.N.C.

Hull News

So little news has been available of late that this column includes news collected during the past three months.

The only event of note during this period was the recent Annual General Meeting of the Sports' Club. The attendance was extremely poor and the meeting must have been a big disappointment to the convenors.

There were no sports activities to report. The treasurer, Mr. W. Thompson, P.O., was able to report a satisfactory financial position, as during the previous year, subscriptions were suspended and voluntary contributions substituted. This system appears to be meeting with quite a measure of success.

Mr. R. H. Rayner, A.P.O., now on detached duty at Ellesmere Port is, I understand, quite enjoying the change which war has brought him.

Mr. R. Beswick, A.P.O., has been on detached duty in Thurso for some time now, and he too seems well pleased with his war-time appointment.

Mr. F. Bromley, A.P.O., attached to a Training Flight in the R.A.F., finds the work plentiful but interesting. We may expect to see him on leave shortly.

Mr. A. Thompson, A.P.O., who was on D.D. at Fishguard, has been called to the Royal Navy.

Messrs. J. N. White and J. Lazenby, A.P.O.'s, have finished their courses as Wireless Telegraphists and are now afloat. We wish them safe voyages and a speedy return.

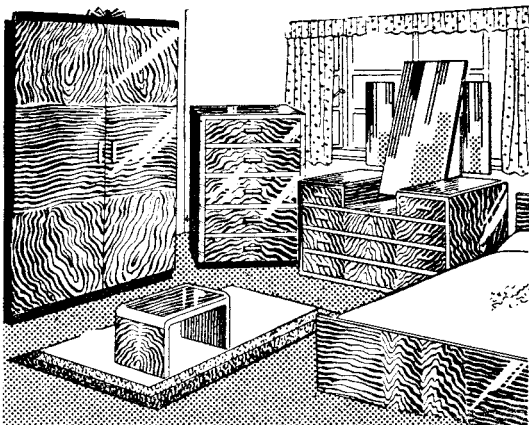
N. S. M.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BOOKS URGENTLY REQUIRED for B.R.C.S. War Hospitals' Libraries. Please give generously.—Mrs. Allhusen, Organising Secretary, North Wilts Branch, Easterton, Devizes, Wilts.

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C.J.

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