

CUSTOMS JOURNAL

THE
EST. 1904
OFFICIAL JOURNAL CUSTOMS & EXCISE
PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

VOL. 39. No. 961.

OCTOBER, 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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THE CUSTOMS FUND.

NOTICE.

A SPECIAL MEETING OF SUBSCRIBERS to the Customs Annuity and Benevolent Fund, Incorporated, will be held in the REFRESHMENT CLUB (Ground Floor), City Gate House, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2, on THURSDAY, the 26th NOVEMBER, 1942, at 5 o'clock p.m., in accordance with the provisions of Rule 20, for the purpose of electing ONE DIRECTOR to fill the vacancy caused by the death of SIR JOHN SMALE SUTTON.

F. T. G. HARRIS, Secretary.

Customs Fund Office,
H.M. Customs and Excise,
City Gate House,
LONDON, E.C.2.
October, 1942.

The Fund is arranging for such cases to be notified to them with a view to enquiries being made through local committees to ascertain if the dependants are in need. If so, continuing allowances are made forthwith, to be discontinued in the fortunate event of the missing man turning up.

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CHANGES IN THE STAFF

TO 19th OCTOBER, 1942.

PREVENTIVE OFFICERS:—

Gray, H. H., Southampton to Preston.
Spencer, W. C., London to Manchester.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS

Pearson, J. W., Preventive Officer.
White, W. T., Preventive Officer.

OUR BOYS

Reported missing after the Dieppe Raid, Mr. Jack Grace, A.B., eldest son of the late Mr. G. W. Grace, has now been reported as a Prisoner of War, and is quite well.

OBITUARY

Mr. P. D. P. FAGAN, A.P.O.

The Port Talbot Staff were deeply moved in August to learn that Mr. P. D. P. Fagan, A.P.O., had lost his life in a flying accident.

From the information available it appears that on August 12th, when out on a night flying exercise in the final stage of his training, the plane for some unknown reason dived into the sea and disappeared. Efforts to trace survivors or wreckage proved unavailing, and the cause of the accident remains a mystery.

Pat joined our service in September, 1936, was appointed to Port Talbot on probation, and received his commission in the latter part of 1937. From the very beginning he was very interested in the work of the department and he wasted no time in his effort to attain a standard of proficiency. A keen Association member, Pat did much to liven our local meetings with his flair for debate. In the "Journal" he contributed many letters on controversial Association questions and produced a series of informative material on Dangerous Doings. This activity won him one of the "Journal" pens, of which he was very proud.

In March, 1939, after much negotiation and effort, he succeeded in organising a Dangerous Drugs Exhibition at the Welsh College of Pharmacy, Cardiff, when Mr. R. Vernon Lloyd, Head of the College, and members of his staff, were present to demonstrate chemical tests and to describe and explain exhibits. This was an achievement of outstanding merit for which his Bristol Channel colleagues were very grateful.

As was inevitable, his entry into our department was greeted with the usual "leg-pull," but he absorbed it with a good humour that gained him the affection of all. He was a character entirely himself, ingenuous, free of pretension, and with that noble ambition to serve his fellow men. This was fully illustrated in his untiring efforts to serve his country as soon as war broke out.

Almost immediately he made application to the Board for release to serve. Undaunted by a refusal and with every intention to try again, he set to work to acquire qualifications which would shorten his period of training. With his eye on the Fleet Air Arm, he travelled to Cardiff and Swansea in his own time and at his own expense for tuition as a wireless operator. When he eventually succeeded in obtaining a test for flying service of the Royal Navy he failed to reach the required standard. Still undismayed, he carried on his studies and later managed to gain the Board's acquiescence to his service as a naval rating. Within a short period of time he obtained and successfully negotiated the examination for observer in the Fleet Air Arm. This was typical of Pat; he set his eye on the goal and allowed no obstacle to divert him.

In mourning the loss of a faithful comrade, a true friend and a gallant gentleman, we extend our heartfelt and sincere sympathy to his parents, and thank them for that period of Pat's company that endeared him to us all.

H.E.P.B.

CURRENT COMMENTS

The Board

THE first public indication of the changes on the Board was given in *The Times*:—

"The King has approved the following appointments:—

Sir Archibald Carter, on vacating the Chairmanship of the Eastern Group Supply Council, to be Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise in succession to Sir Wilfrid Eady.

Mr. Otto Mundy to be Deputy Chairman in succession to the late Sir John Sutton.

Mr. W. H. Rhydderch to be a Commissioner of Customs and Excise."

At the October meeting of the Departmental Council, Sir Archibald was in the Chair. The Staff Side welcomed the new Chairman, and congratulated Mr. Mundy and Mr. Rhydderch on their appointments.

Sir Archibald, in his opening remarks, said he could not claim to be an expert on Whitley procedure, but he was a strong supporter of the system. In his view, Whitley was an integral part of the administration, and it was his intention to operate it to the best of his ability and to strive to maintain the high standard attained on his important Whitley body.

Executive Committee

At its first meeting held at the end of September the newly elected P.S.A. Executive Committee considered the Council instruction "to make suitable arrangements for the conduct of Association business between the normal quarterly meetings of the Executive." After a full discussion, it was decided not to continue the War Emergency Committee, but to maintain Executive Committee control throughout. The full Committee will meet not less frequently than once a quarter, and at the monthly meetings in between "a majority of the Executive Committee will attend."

The next meeting takes place on the 29th October at the Offices of the C. & E. Federation, Walter House, Strand, London.

Detached Duty Officers

In the last issue we announced that our negotiations on travelling time for these officers had resulted in certain concessions, and that a circular had been sent out to Collectors. These concessions as applied to Detached Duty officers generally represented a distinct improvement, but the position of officers detached to remote stations could not be regarded as satisfactory. We are pleased, however, to be able to report an improvement in this latter connection. The strict rule, that "odd days" under para. 3 of O.W.O. 9/42, Part 1, must not be tacked on to minuted leave, is to be relaxed. When staff on detached duty are unable, owing to the remoteness of their station, etc., to take advantage of the concession covered by the earlier circular, the Board would offer no objection to a "separate" day under para. 3 of the O.W.O. being added at the beginning and at the end of the spell of minuted leave to cover lengthy travelling.

Talks are still proceeding on the position of staff in the Orkneys.

Uniform

The question of the issue of rank distinctions to A.P.O.s which had stood adjourned on the Departmental Council, was discussed at the September meeting of that body. The position as far as the Official Side was concerned was unchanged, and it was suggested that the item be adjourned *sine die*. The Staff Side objected and claimed an adjournment for a specified period, and eventually it was agreed to adjourn discussion until March next. It would be possible, of course, for either side to re-open the matter at any time.

Special Inquiry Staff

In a letter from the Board dated 12th October we were informed of the promotion of the undermentioned to Officers on the Special Inquiry Staff:—

T. J. Neill, Preventive Officer, Liverpool.

K. Bowes, Assistant Preventive Officer, Dover (detached to Newport).

J. F. Anderson, Departmental Clerical Officer, Glasgow.

These promotions are made under the conditions of O.W.O. 2/42, Part 1 (II), and result from the interviews arranged under that Order.

From the same letter we learned that Mr. C. Simison, Officer on the Staff, had been promoted to one of the new posts of Inquiry Officer. Mr. Simison was with us as an A.P.O. before joining the Inquiry Staff.

Our congratulations to them all.

Joint Committee Elections

The annual election of officers of the Joint Committee (C. & E. Associations) resulted as follows:—

Chairman: F. C. Perkins.

Vice-Chairman: F. Houghton.

Secretary: H. A. Mather.

Treasurer: P. Nevell.

Assistant Secretary: A. E. Farmer.

With the exception of the post of Vice-Chairman, which remained unfilled after the election of Mr. Perkins as Chairman, the existing holders of the posts were re-elected.

Mr. Houghton, the new Vice-Chairman, is the popular Secretary of the C. & E. Branch of the C.S.C.A.

"Is Your Journey . . . ?"

The Government has decided to restrict evacuated (and detached) Civil Servants to the use of two free or partly free travel passes during the period October to March. We think members should know that the original proposal was to limit the arrangements to one free and one partly free journey, but the Staff Side was able to get the proposals slightly improved. In accepting this, they made it clear that it was conditional on the Civil Service restriction being part of a comprehensive scheme for eliminating unessential travel during the winter months for the community as a whole.

At Dieppe

As a sequel to the announcement in the last issue that Jack Berry, A.P.O., London, and Arthur Chaney, A.P.O., Southampton, both now with the Navy, had taken part in the Combined Operations at Dieppe, we were very pleased to read in *The Times* (21st October) that Temp. Licut. A Chaney, R.N.V.R., had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his share in the raid.

Preventive Staff—Eire

We read, with very real interest, the report in *The Customs Journal* (the Official organ of our contemporaries in Eire) that success has at last crowned their efforts to change the title of the Preventive Man to that of Assistant Preventive Officer.

Unfortunately they have not been so successful on the salary side, but they know they have a good case and have not given up hopes. The present scales are not a great deal different from those obtaining on this side at the time we secured the change of title about twenty years ago. Their present maxima are C.P.O.s £380, P.O.s £230, A.P.O.s £132 12s. and Temp. A.P.O.s £117.

A New Association

We have just received the Report of the inaugural meeting of the C. & E. Watchers' Association. Members may remember that some years ago the old Watchers' Association, then at a very low ebb, was taken over by the G.M. & M.G. Association. The present situation has developed from a break-away on the part of some 190 London members and, to quote from the document, "overwhelming support was also reported from provincial districts." We do not profess to know the ins and out of the reason that led up to this break-away, nor would we attempt to take sides in this issue. Any secessionist movement must at first be deplored, and its eventual justification judged on results. Time and time alone, therefore, will show whether this is in the best interests of our very good friends the Watchers.

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and fifty-fourth meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 23rd September, 1942, the Chair being taken by O. Mundy, Esq., C.B.

Before the commencement of the business on the Agenda the Chairman made reference to the lamented death of Sir John Sutton, Deputy Chairman of the Board. He said Sir John's passing was a great loss to the Board. His knowledge of the work of the Department was encyclopædic. Since the war his health had been very poor, and he had with difficulty continued his attendance; but his courage never failed, and he would long be missed and held in high regard by all.

The Vice-Chairman associated the Staff Side with the Chairman's remarks. They—like the Official Side—felt the loss of Sir John Sutton very keenly. His profound and extensive knowledge of staffs and staffing matters was valuable to both sides of the Council, and the Staff Side had always held him in very high esteem.

The Vice-Chairman announced the appointment of Mr. H. A. Mather as a member of the Staff Side and as Staff Secretary; and of Mr. T. J. Robbins as a member of the Staff Side in place of Mr. J. A. Hoyles. Mr. Robbins' place at this meeting was being taken by Mr. P. Terry.

The Chairman then extended an Official Side welcome to Mr. Mather as Staff Side Secretary in succession to Mr. G. T. Bussey. The Official Side felt sure that Mr. Mather would uphold the great traditions of his predecessors.

MAN-POWER.

(a) G.O. 32/1941.

- (i) The Official Side intimated with reference to the surplus Chief Clerks that one had already gone to the Ministry of Supply. Four had been offered to the Ministry of Fuel, and if that Ministry were unable to take the men, the Ministry of Supply would be approached again. Two Chief Clerks had applied for transfer to the Ministry of Supply, and a third applicant was expected.
- (ii) Regarding disagreements reached in local consultative panels on arrangements proposed under General Order 32/41, the Staff Side asked how it was intended to deal with these at Headquarters. As an alternative to reference back for discussion in Local Whitley Committees and subsequent submission to the Departmental Council, the Official Side considered that such disagreements might conveniently be discussed informally by representatives of both Sides of the Council on a small Committee with power to implement the agreed decisions, the result being reported to the Council, and any remaining disagreement dealt with thereat. The Staff Side agreed.

(b) Kennet Committee Report.

The Official Side intimated that twenty-six men had been selected for, and had taken up, technical posts in other Departments; of twenty-eight men selected for technical commissions in H.M. Forces, sixteen had already been taken, ten men were awaiting call to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and two to the Royal Air Force. In reply to a Staff Side request, the Official Side said that they would do everything possible to expedite the call for these twelve men.

(c) Release of Women.

The Official Side said that the National Service Act was now being applied to women born in the first half of 1922, and they had had inquiry from H.M. Treasury as to the number that could be released without prior substitution. They hoped to satisfy the Treasury on this point. The Staff Side asked for information as to the number of women to be released without prior substitution, and the Official Side promised to furnish the figure.

(d) Officer Grade Complement.

With reference to the Staff Side's inquiry at the last Council meeting respecting the number of Officers who had been allowed to retire and had not received an inquiry as

to their willingness to go on the reserve, the Official Side gave the following information as to the present position:—

Particulars of Officers who, in the period 1/1/40 to 1/9/42, have (1) finally left the Service; (2) become eligible for final retirement, but were still serving on the 1st September, 1942.

(1) Finally left the Service. Grounds for leaving.	No. of Officers.
Premature retirement due to ill health	26
Ill health (60 years or over)	5
Declined options to continue service	34
Unsuitable and option not offered	13
Retired at own request before normal date	19
Retired finally following retention or re-employment	21
Died whilst retained or re-employed	4
Miscellaneous grounds	3
Total	125

(2) Eligible for final retirement, but still serving.

Capacity in which serving.	No. of Officers.
Retained in Establishment Grade	36
Re-employed in temporary capacity	96
Total	132
Grand total	257

The 34 Officers who had declined options and 21 Officers who had retired following retention or re-employment had been sent an invitation to volunteer for re-employment if needed. The 19 Officers who had required at own request before normal date would be sent similar invitations, subject to Collector's certificate that these men were fit and efficient when retired.

Regarding the 29 men remaining on the register of the reserve at 31st December, 1939, to whom inquiry as to their willingness for re-employment had been issued, 14 positive replies had been received, all of which were qualified as to the locality and/or the nature of employment. Taking into account these qualifications, there were no suitable vacancies for seven men, one man had applied for employment in a Station which was at present filled by an Unattached Officer for the Station Officer on prolonged sick leave, and the wishes of the remaining six men could only be met by allocating them to Stations vice Displaced Officers.

With reference to the Staff Side's counter-proposals for meeting possible shortage in the Officer Grade, the Official Side observed that counter-proposals (1) and (2) were covered by the foregoing remarks: in regard to counter-proposal (3), the Official Side were prepared to extend the employment of Women Pension Officers on Old Age Pension work. In regard to counter-proposal (4), they were prepared to extend the field of suitable candidates for temporary promotion to the Officer Grade on an acting basis to include Waterguard Grades. The Staff Side had at the last meeting expressed their rejection of the Official Side proposal (c), i.e., the dilution of the Officer Grade by recruitment of "Temporary Assistants," but the Official Side could not pledge themselves. The Staff Side hoped that if a situation arose in which such dilution became necessary they would be afforded an opportunity of further discussion. The Official Side promised that such opportunity would be given, observing that the matter was not of immediate urgency at present.

The Council then readjourned the item.

(c) Old Age Pension Work.

The Staff Side inquired whether any developments had taken place with regard to the transfer of Old Age Pensions work to the Assistance Board. The Official Side said that discussions had taken place with H.M. Treasury, and they were pressing for the whole of the surplus of the Women Pension Officer Staff to be taken over by the Assistance Board. The Treasury had indicated, however, that the Assistance Board would be able to absorb only about 50

per cent. and that efforts would be made to find other posts for the remainder. The Ministry of Labour hoped to take over some of the surplus as Employment Officers, and there would be no bar to the promotion of such transferees to the post of 3rd Class Officer, although no guarantee could be given. In reply to further Staff Side inquiry, the Official Side said that no official intimation had yet been received from the Treasury, but plans were being formulated for transfer of the work as from 1st January next. It was anticipated that more definite information would be received from the Assistance Board during November. As regards Women Pension Surveyors, some might be transferred. The Staff Side would be kept informed of any developments as they occurred.

(f) **Position of Watchers.**

Regarding nine Watchers at various Ports mentioned at the last Council meeting the Official Side announced that six had been retained, inquiries respecting two had been sent to the respective Collectors, and a reference respecting the ninth would be sent at the appropriate time before his normal retiring date.

(g) **Rae Committee.**

The Staff Side asked if a Treasury Liaison Officer had yet been appointed in connection with the investigation of Customs and Excise establishments for purposes of the Rae Committee. The Official Side were unable to give any information on this point, and in reply to a further Staff Side inquiry as to the steps to be taken to ensure proper Staff Side contacts during the investigations, said that the instruction to Liaison Officers visualised consultation with the Staff in certain circumstances, and that on fuller information being made available the Staff Side would be informed of the arrangements to be made.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER QUESTIONS.

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

(i) The Official Side intimated that the particular work for which a Principal Warehouseman in the Stores Branch had been retained was now finished, and notice of retirement at the end of the year had been given to the individual. The vacancy would be filled.

(ii) In reply to Staff Side inquiry as to the progressive application of the retirement policy, the Official Side said six members of the Controlling Grade had been retired and seven had received notice of retirement: in the Surveyor Grade, four had retired and four had received notice: two Senior Chief Clerks had been retained after normal retiring age: in the Chief Clerk Grade, five had been retained and two finally retired: and three Departmental Higher Clerical Officers had been retained. As regards Waterguard Grades, one Superintendent, one Surveyor, one Chief Preventive Officer and several Preventive Officers had been retained.

The Staff Side said they could not see the reason for retention of staff if there was no opportunity of transferring the surplus elsewhere, for example, in the Chief Clerk Grade.

The Official Side said that they had examined, and would continue to examine, the cases of officials retained after normal retiring age; they pointed out that many members of the clerical grades were being loaned to other Departments, and that any shortages arising from such loans would be made good by promotion.

The item was re-adjourned.

(b) **Vacancies in the Waterguard.**

The Official Side said that they were awaiting application from Chief Preventive Officers for posts of Assistant Censor under the Censorship control, and from Preventive Officers for Deputy Assistant Censors. Also a post of Seamen's Welfare Officer had been offered for the candidature of a Chief Preventive Officer, but no application was yet forthcoming.

The Staff Side said that the Censorship posts appeared to be unattractive from the financial point of view owing to the loss of emoluments to be sustained by any successful applicant. They felt that if the remuneration was attractive a sufficient number of volunteers would present themselves. The Official Side said that full information as regards salary

and emoluments had been given to the Censorship Authorities, but it would be understood that the scales approved for the posts could not be increased specially for Customs people transferred thereto.

The item was re-adjourned.

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

One meeting of the informal committee had taken place, and investigation was proceeding regarding the posts left undetermined thereat. Another meeting would shortly take place, and the Council re-adjourned the item accordingly.

(d) **Promotion of Warehousemen to the Clerical Grade.**

In reply to the Staff Side inquiry, the Official Side said that in view of the sub-clerical grades, including that of Warehouseman, for promotion to the Clerical Grade was made periodically, and that further interviews would be held at an early opportunity.

(e) **Staff Side proposal that the Treasury be notified on the lines of paragraph 45 of the 1920 Reorganisation Report of the names of Executive Officers in the Department suitably qualified for Admission to the Administrative Class.**

The Staff Side quoted from paragraph 45 of the above-mentioned Report "that the (Administrative) Class should be open to all men and women already employed in the Service who show early proof of real ability and promise of being able to discharge in course of time higher administrative functions," and that it should be an instruction to Heads of Departments to submit to a Central Authority the names of young men and women having, in their judgment, the necessary qualifications for admission to the Administrative Class. It was the Staff Side's view that such individuals could be found in the Department.

The Official Side thought the matter would be common to the Civil Service as a whole, and they could say no more at present than that they would give the matter consideration. The item was adjourned accordingly.

RE-SCHEMING AND METHODS OF WORK.

(a) **Purchase Tax Centres (G.O. 51/1941).**

The informal committee having met and the revised instructions having now been issued as amendments to G.O. 7/41, Part 16, the Council decided to withdraw the item from the Agenda.

(b) **Local Staffing Decisions.**

The assessments of units of two Distillery Stations were referred back for treatment under G.O. 32/41.

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

The Official Side intimated that only one case remained for determination, and the decision would be dependent on the result of a re-arrangement of work with reference to G.O. 32. 41. The Council accordingly re-adjourned the item.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION.

A local disagreement from Manchester was referred back for reconsideration, and the question of accommodation for the staff of the London West Purchase Tax Centre was raised by the Staff Side.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Agreements that the option limit for Preventive Officers in the case of seizures be raised from 25s. to 50s., and the payment of allowances for Mercantile Marine work at Blyth were ratified.

A disagreement on travelling expenses and overtime claims for Unattached Officers officiating or assisting at Immingham Dock from the Officer Grade Committee was re-argued and adjourned, and the adjourned disagreement from the Waterguard Sectional Committee on the Staff Side proposal for Uniform Rank distinctions for Assistant Preventive Officers was, after discussion, re-adjourned for six months.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on 21st October, 1942.

Report of 1942 Conference

(Continued from page 107.)

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

The Council authorised the setting up of machinery to deal with a wide range of subjects which will become of first-class importance at the cessation of hostilities, e.g., Aerodrome Staffing, Reversion to Pre-war Practices, Departmental Structure, etc., etc. They recommended that local committees be formed to assist the main committee in the considerable research work necessary, and hoped that a plan of campaign will be ready to be put into immediate effect at the appropriate moment.

Among other proposals referred to the Committee of Post-War Reconstruction were several dealing with an earlier retiring age, and one in connection with family allowances.

CUSTOMS FUND DIRECTORATE

The continued failure during the past few years of Waterguard candidates to secure election to the Customs Fund Directorate has been of grave concern to Waterguard members of that Fund. So long as the present system governing these elections obtains it is theoretically possible for all the seats to be held by members of the grade with the largest voting strength, and Waterguard representation in the past has only been possible by arrangement with other grades—a practice now fallen into disuse. The Council expressed keen dissatisfaction with the situation, and authorised the Executive Committee to use Association machinery for giving all possible aid to candidates.

RUMMAGE CREWS

The General Secretary stated that in many districts shortage of staff had led to the formation of rummage of less than the normal strength of one P.O. and three A.P.O.'s, and it would be generally recognised that this had been unavoidable in many instances, but every rummage officer knew that the loss of efficiency of these crews was considerably greater than that shown by the simple proportion of three to two, and it was desirable that the Official Side should be so informed. He therefore welcomed the Tyne resolution: "That the formation of rummage crews of less than one P.O. and three A.P.O.'s should be exceptional, and that such depletions should be made up whenever possible." The resolution was accepted for action in the Waterguard Sectional Committee.

DUTY FREE CONCESSIONS (SHIPS' CREWS)

The resolution: "That the allowance of tobacco goods left out for use or issued for use on board be $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. per man for eight days irrespective of rank," gave an opportunity to Councillors to tell of the widespread dissatisfaction of seamen (of all ranks) with the existing scale of allowances and the regulations governing them. Many expressed the opinion that the regulations were wholly inadequate to meet war-time requirements, and were a direct incentive to smuggling. There appeared to be three main causes for complaint: (1) the small quantities allowed, (2) the many occasions when the strict application of the regulations prevents a seaman landing with a full $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of tobacco on severing connection with his ship, and (3) there was no justification for the different scales for masters, officers and crew respectively. It was finally decided that the Executive Committee should examine the whole question of duty free allowances and issues, and take appropriate action without delay.

The possibility of raising the present limit of 50/- (duty) for the granting of preference without documentary evidence to members of ships' crews was also to be discussed with the Official Side.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Organising Secretary presented accounts which covered the three years to 31st March, 1942. He stated that the present financial situation was very satisfactory, £500 had been invested in Defence Bonds and a further £500 was now available for a like purpose.

The future, however, gave cause for some concern; a study of the accounts showed a progressive reduction in

income over the three years under review, and though in each year there had been an excess of income over expenditure this was almost entirely due to the absence of Council and Executive Committee meetings.

Three main reasons for the fall in income were:—

1. Approximately 300 members were absent with the Forces. Though the decision to exempt these members from payment of subscription had been wise, and would create valuable goodwill for the future, it had resulted in a revenue loss of about £300 per annum.
2. Disturbance of the work of District Organisers owing to the war-time fluidity of staff.
3. Termination of the advertisement contract.

As against these, since the Beer Lane office had been destroyed no office expenses (rent, light, telephone, etc.) had been incurred. The affiliation fees to the C. & E. Group, through which contact was made with the National Staff Side, were about half those previously paid to the C.S. Confederation (now wound up). Saving on travelling expenses and subsistence due to the formation of the War Emergency Committee and the absence of Council meetings had been very substantial.

So far as he could judge the income for the year 1941/42 represented about 70% of the income that could be expected from 100% membership (exclusive of those with the Forces), and if, during the war years, with annual meetings of the Council resumed and a full Executive Committee in being, the income and expenditure were to be balanced we must either get something like 100% membership or reconsider the decision to exempt our members with the Forces from payment.

Arising from this statement it was agreed to initiate a membership drive and invite Messrs. C. F. Shaw and L. Battersby to assist the Executive Committee in the publicity.

The Organising Secretary went on to answer several questions in regard to the accounts, particularly in reference to the amounts shown as being in the hands of the Organising Secretary each year, and it was arranged that he should make a full statement in the "Journal" on certain aspects of the accounts so that they might be more readily understood by the ordinary member.

In conclusion he thanked District Organisers for the very able way that they had assisted him in very trying conditions, particularly following the loss of records in the fire.

The accounts for the three years were adopted, and the Organising Secretary congratulated on the very fine work he had put in under most difficult circumstances.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were elected:—

- President:** Mr. W. E. Standing.
General Secretary: Mr. W. H. Powell.
Organising Secretary: Mr. A. E. Farmer.
Assistant Secretary: Mr. H. L. Boalch.
Editor "Customs Journal": Mr. D. T. Sutherland.

Arising from the discussion of the resolution: "That representation of the A.P.O. grade on the Secretariat be restored," notice of motion for amendment of the Constitution was given as under:—

"That the Officers of this Association, other than the President, shall be elected by ballot of the membership and machinery similar to that obtaining in respect of Council elections be set up."

ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES

Joint Committee (C. & E. Associations).—Messrs. Boalch, Farmer, Powell and Richards. (It was agreed that Mr. Ramsay should also serve on the Committee in the event of Mr. Farmer being accepted as an ex-officio member by virtue of his office as Assistant Secretary to the Committee.)

Departmental Whitley Council.—Messrs. Farmer and Powell.

C. & E. Group.—Messrs. Farmer and Powell.

Suggestions Committee.—Mr. H. L. Boalch.

Executive Committee.—Messrs. G. T. Clarke, Grant, Reilly, Shaw and Sutton.

WAR EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

The Council, having decided that it was desirable that normal quarterly meetings of the newly elected Executive Committee should be held, were not prepared to authorise the continuance of the War Emergency Committee to conduct business between meetings of the Executive Committee, though it was recognised that the War Emergency Committee had served a useful purpose at a time of National stress. The Executive Committee were instructed to hold an early meeting at which arrangements could be made for dealing with matters of urgency which may arise between meetings.

BENEVOLENT FUND

The Executive Committee was instructed to examine and report on the possibility of instituting a Benevolent Fund for the benefit of members.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE FEDERATION

The Council placed on record its gratitude to the C. & E. Federation for the facilities that had been afforded in the use of the Federation offices for meetings since the loss of the Association offices, and for the ready help that had been available at all times.

LIVERPOOL PRESENTATION

T. J. D. Large, Esq., C.B.E., Collector, Liverpool.

A very distinguished gathering met in the Assembly Hall, Cunard Buildings, on Wednesday, October 14th, to bid farewell to Mr. T. J. D. Large, C.B.E., who retired recently after 43 years' service, the last thirteen of which were spent as Collector at the Port of Liverpool.

Representatives of every grade in the Customs and Excise Department were present, and following light refreshments, Mr. J. A. Acheson, Asst. Collector, as Chairman, opened the proceedings by welcoming Mr. and Mrs. Large and various distinguished guests, departmental and otherwise. He then called upon the Hon. Secretary of the Presentation Committee to read letters from the many friends unable to attend.

These came from all over the United Kingdom, and were so numerous that in the majority of cases it was only possible to read extracts. Of particular interest to Waterguard Officers was a letter from our Inspector-General, Mr. C. M. Woodford, C.B.E., as also were letters from Messrs. W. J. Lympany, J. P. Little, W. A. Girvan, W. M. Sheehan, H. T. Atwill, Waterguard Superintendents and Surveyors, all of whom have served in Liverpool under Mr. Large.

Following the reading of the letters, our Waterguard Superintendent, Mr. B. J. Herrington, had the unenviable task of being the first speaker; unenviable because there seemed so little that could be added to the spate of praise contained in the letters just read.

Mr. Herrington rose to the occasion, however, and brilliantly amplified some of the points made in Mr. Woodford's letter, particularly those concerning the lively interest invariably shown by Mr. Large in the sporting activities of the Customs and Excise Department as a whole, and the Waterguard Branch in particular.

The Liverpool Preventive Staff Sports and Social Clubs owed much of their success to the help given by Mr. Large, and we all looked forward to the time, in the not-too-far-distant better days ahead, when these activities would be resumed. We should then be delighted to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Large among us again.

Tribute was also paid to the unflinching dignity, patience and kindly understanding shown by Mr. Large in the performance of his varied duties, particularly the calm and confident example he set in the times of greatest difficulty.

Many other speakers followed in similar strain, prominent among whom were Mr. T. B. Gibson, who has been appointed to succeed Mr. Large as Collector at Liverpool, and Mr. C. F. Deslandes, Chief Inspector, who travelled from London specially to be present. These speakers pointed out how greatly the department had advanced in prestige among the local commercial and shipping fraternity under Mr. Large's able administration, and how, having achieved his ambition to become Collector, Liverpool, he steadfastly stuck to his decision to refuse all higher office despite many tempting

offers. If further testimony were required, it was forthcoming in the fact that His Majesty the King had twice seen fit to bestow honours upon Mr. Large.

Apt humour, quotation and anecdote characterised most of the speeches. Particularly good were those given by Mr. S. J. Hibbert, Assistant Collector; Mr. W. H. Irish, Officer, our old friend and entertainer at many Waterguard functions; Mr. W. J. Arlett, retired Surveyor, who amused us with tales of the doings of various Collectors at Liverpool, going back as far as the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and Mr. C. F. Shaw, A.P.O., who said Mr. Large was truly worthy of the description of an English gentleman. As frequently happened in such cases, however, the person concerned turned out to be an Irishman!

Winding-up on behalf of all present, and making the presentation, Mr. L. Darby, Officer, Vice-Chairman, Staff Side, Local Whitley Council, said he had been struck by the absolute sincerity of all the speakers. He added his tribute, mentioning the exceptional interest taken in Local Whitley proceedings by Mr. Large, who, he said, had never missed a single meeting during his entire term of office as Collector, Liverpool—a shining example of the true Whitley spirit.

Saying that he felt very highly honoured at being selected to make the presentation, Mr. Darby then handed over the handsome mahogany bureau and silver salver, which had been on view before and during the ceremony, together with a very attractive travelling case for Mrs. Large.

He reiterated the wishes of all friends, absent and present—that they be long spared to enjoy a very happy future together. Complete retirement will, for the time being, be deferred, as Mr. Large has already taken up an important post under the Ministry of Food at Colwyn Bay; needless to say, he carries with him the good wishes of everyone for success in his new sphere.

Rising to reply, Mr. Large was held up for several minutes by the sustained applause of the big gathering. Obviously moved by this expression of goodwill, he was nevertheless soon in his stride, and in thanking the meeting for the kindness always shown to himself and Mrs. Large, expressed the hope that they would soon be among us again on social occasions.

He referred to various incidents and friendships formed during his long career, saying that he had always endeavoured to do his duty—pleasant or otherwise—to the best of his ability. He thanked the Liverpool Staff for their loyal co-operation at all times, adding that he was proud to have served in the Department with them, and to have been their local head. He wished one and all God-speed and the very best of luck in the future.

So a great man, and a good friend of the Waterguard, left us. We hope that his future services to the State under Lord Woolton will be even more auspicious than those rendered during his long tenure of office as Collector, Liverpool.

In conclusion, just a word of congratulation to the Presentation Committee on their splendid staging of a really memorable occasion.

W.C.H.

Waterguard Spotlight

"Temp. Lieut. A. Chaney, R.N.V.R., has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross."—Current Comments, page 115.

"Fred Howe, 3rd Officer, Merchant Navy, was home on leave after being torpedoed and spending four days in an open boat."—Merseyside News, page 123

"One exile recently had a shock when a Security Official blissfully observed that an A.P.O. could not be a Commissioned Officer in the absence of rank distinction!"—Southampton Notes, page 112.

"May we never underestimate the importance of their job nor the way they do it."—O Wad Some Power, page 122.

The Lads o' London

Three more colleagues have recently joined the ranks of the Forces, viz., Alec Holden and John Scott have entered the Royal Air Force, whilst Walter Pedder took up duty with the General Service Corps. John volunteered for flying duties and is at present stationed in London. The best wishes of the staff are conveyed to these latest recruits to the fighting Services, and it is hoped that they will maintain contact with their colleagues in this department.

I made a few enquiries of Branch 10.C of the A. & C.G.'s department, and found that one, C. V. Armstrong, who was a London A.P.O. prior to his call-up, is an A/C2 in the R.A.F., and also that Cecil Johnson is a Sergeant in the same Service. Just what duties they perform are facts not known to me at present, but I hope to find out soon.

Stan Mew's first letter to me since he left the department for service in the Royal Navy gave me the news that he is now a Sub-Lieutenant and is in charge of a contraband control search party with headquarters at Gibraltar. Apparently he has been most successful in this position, as he has been responsible for securing some good detections. Stan said the Authorities think him a genius, although he would even now be slung out of any self-respecting rummage crew. At the time of writing, he is enjoying a long period of leave with his wife and baby in Putney, and he wished to be remembered to all his old friends. Most Waterguard officers in the Navy would, too, be successful in similar posts such as Stan's if they were given the opportunities.

Accounts of the journeyings of some of the lads to overseas climes are to hand: Ken Ford has gone to the Middle East—the last communication that his father received from him said that he had safely reached Cape Town and was then quite well and in good spirits. Ben Battle is on his way to an unknown destination, and has managed to make a friend of the Chief Steward of his transporting vessel. The ship is a strange one to him, and he passes the time by attending discussion groups. A safe voyage, Ben, and here's all the best in your new surroundings. A private in the R.A.M.C., he met Harry Farren (who is also due to go overseas) in a train on the way to Leeds just recently. Bill Menzies is the other chap who has travelled across the ocean, but he went westwards and is now safely in Michigan on a flying course. His address (note this, Bristol friends) can be had upon application.

Guy Gravett has been commissioned, and is now a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. Jack Bushell has left Dover, and is instructing raw recruits in Plymouth. Bert Finch is a L/Corporal in the Intelligence Corps.

Llew. Barnes was invaded home after his grim experiences in the Mediterranean, and his wife told me that she last heard from him when he was at Durban awaiting a steamer to fetch him home. We are hoping to hear soon that he has arrived in this country.

Alec Wheatley, when home on leave last month, visited the parents of Wally Blake, Alec Gerrie and John McKenzie. A good lad is Alec, and one who would be more "at home" in the Church!! than in the Waterguard. The stork has been kind to Stan Wandless and brought to him and his wife, four months ago, a son and heir to carry on his good name. Stan made his 30th jump the other week, and now has found that the thrills of parachuting have become very commonplace. He has tried to add refinements but, short of jumping without a parachute, there isn't much that he can do. He means to get his quota of Huns, and no quarter to be shown.

Ken Ford's father—Mr. A. J. Ford—has kindly offered his hospitality to any member of the Waterguard in the Forces who happens to be near his home. The address is 82, BROMEFIELD, STANMORE, MIDDLESEX.

The best thanks of the staff have been extended to Mr. Ford for his kind offer. There are now 12 houses to which serving colleagues can go for hospitality, and a revised list of these places will be published in the January, 1943, issue of the C.J. Meanwhile, will others who are interested please send me their names and addresses for inclusion in the new list? It is a grand chance of doing something to make our lads comfortable.

At home we heard that Ted Ray had supplanted the Landing Officer at the Hendon Airport. Claude Spencer has transferred to Manchester, and Frank Boodle and Bert Sandford have left Liverpool for Greenock, and Ira Hill for Holyhead, still, of course, on detached duty.

A popular figure in London—Walter Varney—has been laid aside after undergoing an operation, and I am told that everyone hopes that he will be well ere long.

The staff will remember Fred Howe, who was in London 1935/6 before transferring to Liverpool. He received the Board's permission to join the Merchant Navy as a 3rd Officer. A short time ago his ship, of which his father was the master, was torpedoed and sunk, and although Fred was saved, unfortunately his father was not and went down with his vessel. Sincere sympathy is felt for his mother and for Fred at this time.

The admiration of all for his plucky act is apparent for Eric Eddowes, and those at home are especially pleased. Good luck, Eric, and may it not be very long before you are back on the Harpy launches.

Eric Partridge has written again and sent kind regards to old friends in London and Liverpool.

Christmas greeting cards have been despatched to the chaps overseas, together with the usual compliments of the season from the staff and myself.

Let's hear from you then.

Till the Lights of London shine again.

R.J.L.

Since going to press, news is to hand that Llew. Barnes has landed safely in this country and is at home.—R.J.L.

Bristol News

An Association meeting was held at 58, Queen Square, on Tuesday, 15th September, 1942, attended by a fair number of members. Following confirmation of previous minutes the question of the laundering of fire-watchers' blankets was discussed and strong dissatisfaction was expressed at the delay in operating proper laundering arrangements. It was agreed to request that an extra set of blankets be requisitioned for fire-watchers to enable the laundering arrangements to be operated forthwith.

With regard to heating of the air raid shelter local officials were unable to report any progress on this matter, and it was decided to adjourn the item.

There was a very full discussion on the staffing of Whitchurch Aerodrome, and the District Secretary informed the meeting of the steps he had taken to secure the stationing of an A.P.O. at the airport. The volume of work to be performed there justified the employment of an Asst. P.O. in addition to the P.O., and as the traffic was still increasing the matter had become one of urgency. Informal negotiation had so far produced no result, and it was agreed therefore that, failing satisfaction from informal discussion, the matter should be tabled for discussion in Local Whitley Committee. (It is since learned that the employment of an A.P.O., as required by the P.O., has been approved.)

The meeting then considered a report by the District Organiser on the work and staffing arrangements at another airport where examination of passengers' baggage was being performed by a member of the Officer Grade. Concern was expressed by members at the precedent thus created which might seriously influence post-war reconstruction of the Waterguard, and it was unanimously decided that in the special circumstances appertaining to this airport the facts should be reported to P.S.A. Headquarters.

The election of representatives on Local Whitley Committee resulted as follows:—

P.O. Representative: Mr. Colburn.

Deputy: Mr. Logan.

A.P.O. Representative: Mr. Simpson.

Deputy: Mr. Cowley.

It was also agreed that Mr. Cowley should act as auditor in place of Mr. Daniels, now with the Forces.

As the Interim Report of the Conference had not been generally circulated it was decided to defer consideration of the proceedings to a later date.

T.N.T.

We have a united Association, we have a discerning staff, we seek to unite both, completely. Can that object be achieved? We believe it can be. Many are the arguments over the P.S.A. membership, so to help in clearing the air we propose to set down typical criticisms, excuses and the like. Maybe our answers to them will convince you, maybe not, but our purpose is served if they only make you think over your opinions and ours. You alone, if you are a non-member, or even one of those members whose interest is lukewarm, and subscribing capacity is definitely low, can be convinced in your outlook. The least we can do is to combat the futility of empty criticism and to show good and sufficient cause for our ideals and belief in the possession of a live and vigorous Association.

The old yarn, "**I wasn't asked,**" referred to in our previous article, is now worn out, but if you are still standing on ceremony, we extend to you a very sincere invitation through your Organiser or Secretary to step along with us. Start off from scratch now. Don't wait to be asked.

Someone mentioned "**Vested interests**" recently. Whose vested interests? Just yours. Can they be otherwise? No, Sir! If there are interests which can be termed vested (which we doubt), they are only your own, collectively. Interests there certainly are, but they are P.S.A. interests, or more clearly staff interests, and they are being keenly guarded to-day. The familiar gag, "**Personal interests,**" is tied to the foregoing jibe, too, but that savours of a low punch. We serve no individual, no one class, in this Association. We fight for you and your neighbour, wherever you are. We disdain self-seeking and, distasteful as are occasional reports of self-interests governing local officials' actions, we point to the most effective remedy **you** and we possess, that is, by right of meeting and election, you can put him or them "out of business." The actions of individuals are often quoted as P.S.A. responsibility. Not a bit of it; responsibility is yours, and you know it. It is in your power to elect the best men for the local and national offices. Only apathy in this matter can give cause for discontent.

We can assure you that there is seldom any clinging to office on the part of secretaries, etc., a fact which itself answers much criticism. You can verify this locally. Nationally, we happen to know that the General Secretary, to whom more than anyone you owe an increased wage-envelope, has for years desired a rest. At the Conference names were put up to replace the Assistant Secretary, as K.S. noted in September, but **no one would take the job on.** The Assistant Secretary himself made no effort to be re-elected. Don't fool yourself on this matter. It's amazing what one man can do at a District Meeting or one Councillor at a Conference. The bosses do not get their own way in this

Association by any means. I will add, which partly answers the next objection, that the attention called for by the Association matters to regulations may be compensation when one goes up for promotion, but, really, the positions in examinations do not support this view. One feels that (quite apart from the Association officers who have actually failed for promotion—and if our Secretariat consisted solely of those there'd be another growl!) had these officers given as much time to Volume One as to the Establishment Instructions they'd have done a lot better for themselves.

The progress of individual officers, by merit, is often laid at the P.S.A. door. If you are one of those who share this fantastic belief, we warmly invite you to get into the P.S.A., get a local job as Secretary or Organiser, and see how you get along. You will soon realise (**in between the hours you spend off duty doing P.S.A. work**) that your progress in the promotion stakes is in no way governed by your P.S.A. ability. Of course, if you are not a P.S.A. member or official, it is easy to sling mud around, but you do poor service to your colleagues and yourself.

Sometimes, indeed, frequently, we hear, "**We are only a small group: could do better on our own.**" We discussed the merits, and otherwise, of two separate Staff Associations recently with a member who could debate "for" and "against," but even he convinced us of the overwhelming "against" weight of evidence. To quote only one fraction of the latter, we assert that a separate Association of any one grade could not function under a minimum subscription of £10 per annum per head of membership. How many members would you get at that subscription? A very exclusive set, we'll be bound.

Yet we offer you, irrespective of rank, a constant and sincere Association, vigorous, watchful and keen to improve the conditions and status unceasingly, and your subscription is 6d. a week. We need lay no stress upon the fact that one solid Association is better in every way than two Associations and a divided staff.

Again, one will hear a member of a supervisory grade say that **the difficulty of supervising one's Association colleagues** precludes active membership. We cannot quote personal examples nor can we claim any personal experiences of our own, but we can refute that argument on the basis of personality and the fact that one's Association loyalty is a separate entity to one's Departmental loyalty. A supervisor who allows familiarity, due to close P.S.A. contact, to interfere with official procedure is lacking in personality, and any P.S.A. member or officer who attempts to "trade" upon such contact and approach familiarity is in no way fit to serve the staff.

"BATTSHAW."

(More next month.)

Southampton Notes

Another good bag this month, and a cheering start in that we have the desired news of Arthur Cheney, fully recovered and fit for the "next show." Stan Roberts followed up our gentle hint by sending an interesting account of his own recent activities with the R.N., which will have led him before an Admiralty Board by the time you read this. We hope young Robbie will be successful and eventually possess the proud commission. During the past year he has had a variable existence in England, Scotland and Wales, ending in a welcome spell of leave during September.

We hear that Jimmy (D. B.) James is safe and very well somewhere "at sea"; likewise Bill Foot, who sends greetings via Holly, and seeks the latest silk duties for future use.

Joe and Cliff continue their regular mail, and both remain A.I. The former sends an account of an up-country tour not far from the Equator, together with a snapshot taken on deck in aggressive role; while the latter, seeking news of Joe, sends good news of his own well-being and recent receipt of letters and the "C.J.s".

Jack (A. C.) Hobbs is having a spell ashore at Madagascar, where we hope he will keep fit and safe.

Turning to our R.A.F. contingent, we have news of Les Twentyman, another grand Sergeant Pilot, and as his recent cable came from somewhere fresh, we presume he is on the move, and we are hoping that he may be speeding towards us as we write these lines.

Ron Greenhalgh is still A.I., confirmed by recent mail to his home, and we hear indirectly that the "Great Grav" has left the bachelors, after a fleeting visit to Preston. Best of luck, George, from us all. Hope your training course is going along well.

Jack Welsh, now in the Midlands for Pilot training, after a pleasant spell in the South-West, met Peter Ryan for a brief chat before he left Cornwall. The latter, we presume, is following the course which Jack has completed. Jack managed a visit to Maryport (!) and linked up with several old friends. Detached duty has some compensations.

Sergeant "Jock" Strachan has found time to write again, and very welcome news he sends of himself and Mrs. "Jock." Once again he is in Cumberland, full of beans, and is instructing potential Wireless Operator—Air Gunners, in between regular appearances in Liverpool on those clever 48-hour stunts!

Sergeant Phil Pettit, echoing Bob Jenkinson's compliments to the "C.J." and Ben, sends good news of his activities since he was last seen in Southampton. At present he is in the South-West of Scotland, and has been able to link up with Don Radford (Stranraer), who is still going strong, but, like the rest of us, has one eye constantly upon Southampton. Phil was based near home for a long spell, following which he served in the Orkneys and the Shetlands, but prior to his present instructor duties he was at home again, also instructing for a short time. Phil recalls with some relish certain past occasions spent in the company of our Newlyn colleagues, and both he and Don send you their very best wishes, and especially to those who are overseas.

We are glad to hear of the safe homecoming of Sergeant-Observer George Haywood, after his overseas training course.

There is little news of the exiles this month: Syd Hayward, after a couple of years on D.D. at Milford Haven, has arrived at Holyhead and renewed several acquaintances.

We understand that Mr. E. G. Hooper, P.O., was a probable arrival at Greenock in late September. Our exiles on the Clyde are in good form, and news of them filters through many unexpected sources. One exile recently had a shock when a Security Official blissfully observed that an A.P.O. could not be a Commissioned Officer, in the absence of rank distinction. Tell him, someone!

The lads on t' Canal are still keeping up to scratch, from all accounts, and the occasional reunions are always pleasant affairs.

Home reports contain no surprises, apart from surmise as to possible future departures on D.D.

Gardening topics are very prevalent, and faked photographs of allotment results provide much leg-pulling.

The boys remain well, and join in the general remembrances to you all.

There was a splendid post-Conference meeting in Manchester during September, and we have confidence in the fact that your interests will be well guarded, both present and future, by an Executive Committee of wide experience and go-ahead ideas.

Sunderland Calling

Hello, Forces!

It is with deep regret that I have to record the sudden death of Frank Wilkinson, retired Steersman, on the 5th of September. Frank had gone for his usual walk along Roker Front, accompanied by his daughter; he sat down for a breather and collapsed. A doctor, who was passing, pronounced life extinct.

A wreath in the form of an anchor was sent from the Staff, and Mr. Hodge, C.P.O., and Mr. Terry, E.M., represented the Staff at the funeral. A big shock is coming to George Dixon when he gets the news, for they were very close mates.

To his widow and family we extend our deepest sympathy.

I received a letter from Lieut. C. B. Scarfe written on the 17th of July, 1942. He reported being very fit and well, and (draw your own conclusions) was surrounded by water with only tepid Xport beer to drink (his own expression, that). It was a treat to hear from you, Charles, and a pleasure to learn you had such good company. I expect by this time you will have settled in the new sphere of life. Come again, and good luck to you always.

Pilot-Officer Jack Gaston has reported again. He is now doing an instructor's course at Montrose. He has been dodging round the country on various courses recently, and sounds very much "cheesed off." He does not like the idea of being an instructor, and has been, and still is, trying to become operational. Someone must do that instructor's job, Jack; you will become operational soon enough. Keep smiling, Jack, and keep listening in.

Brian Horn has not reported this month.

Jack Crosby has reported. He contacted me at the office last month whilst on leave, and this month I have received his usual letter. Jack took the Good Lady back with him, having been lucky enough to secure a house. They have now settled down for the duration. He sends his regards to you blokes in the Forces and you exiles. I hope the wife will enjoy the change, Jack. Keep smiling and good luck. Now you have broken the duck, keep it up.

George Simmons has reported. He is fit and well and reports a quiet time at present. He has not succeeded in running a house to earth yet, but is still hoping. I passed on your message and was told to tell you to possess your soul in patience. Keep smiling.

Billy McKeith has not reported this month, but as he has had his Good Lady with him for a holiday, we will excuse him this time. Keep smiling, Bill. All's well.

Our esteemed colleague, Bill Sutton, has not reported yet. I understand that he will be returning to Sunderland in the near future, so that will probably account for the lapse. I needn't say, Bill, that you will be very welcome.

Our respected Chief has had news that his son, Pete, has recently been Commissioned in the Indian Army. Our congratulations to Pete, Guv'nor, please, to say nothing of our best wishes to him for the future.

As usual, the Hun claims are very much over-rated, lads, and the old shack still stands firm—the old duster still remains mast-high. Good luck to you all, and a speedy return to the fold. Cheerio, Forces!

Over to you—over.

O.H.L.

Merseyside News

Information about local happenings in recent weeks has been rather scarce, although the staff have continued to be very busy in their quiet way.

The departure is reported of two of our Detached Duty colleagues, Messrs. F. D. Cambridge and C. F. Sandford, P.O.s transferred to Grimsby and Greenock respectively. We sympathise with them in the further war-time upheavals in their domestic life, and wish them well in their new ports.

The Annual General Meeting of the Liverpool Branch P.S.A., which is due to take place on Wednesday, October 21st, seems to be arousing more than the usual interest. Several controversial items are due for discussion, and it is hoped to be able to report a well-attended meeting.

News of our serving colleagues continues to be received. Word comes from Sub-Lieut. (A) Eric Hewitt, R.N.V.R., that he is now flying Hurricanes and Fulmars at his advanced training station in the South-West. Remembering Eric's stout-hearted displays at left full-back in some of our toughest pre-war football games, we think that he should achieve outstanding successes when he takes the air against tough opponents in the most vital of all struggles. Good luck, Eric, and happy landings.

Fred Howe (3rd Officer, Merchant Navy) called in at the Stage recently. He was home on leave after having been torpedoed and spending four days in an open boat. His father, who was Master of the same vessel, was unfortunately killed by the explosion of the torpedo. Many of our officers knew Capt. Howe, and we offer our sincere sympathies to his family in their tragic bereavement.

Donald Fraser, R.N., is ashore from his minesweeping job, taking a course in radiolocation with a view to securing wider scope and a larger ship.

Word of Sergt. W. H. (Bill) Oates came by way of a birth announcement in the local paper to the effect that his wife (formerly Miss Joan Herrington) had presented him with a daughter. Congratulations both; may she be as good a sport as her parents and grandfather.

Whilst on the subject of happy events, congratulations also to Messrs. R. J. Donaldson and W. Bowen, who have each had a daughter added to their respective families recently.

The Rummage Crews cannot be kept out of the news, and word of a nice seizure of some 17 lbs. of Plug Tobacco on a well-known Cunard White Star liner by Mr. T. Butcher, A.P.O., of the Huskisson Rummage Crew under Mr. W. S. Kemp, P.O., has just come to hand.

There have been several changes since the station minute was issued in July, and due to call-up and transfer of staff the Rummage Crews at Alexandra, Canada and West Kings stations have had to be disbanded. This has been partly remedied, however, by increasing other crews to their peacetime strength of one P.O. and three A.P.O.s.

And that's the news to this hour.

BILL HUGHES.

CIVIL SERVICE VOLUNTARY SAVINGS SCHEME

This scheme of deduction from salaries to purchase Certificates and Bonds has been going on for nearly three years, and many of your colleagues have faced up to it for the whole time; if you have not already done so, have you considered the necessity of joining that band of stalwarts?

The idea of teaching thrift has now long passed, and we face the stern need of *lending to the limit*. At the present time, when the tempo of the war is rising, costs are mounting, and every effort is being made to build up that force which will turn the tide once and for all in favour of the United Nations, then we as Civil Servants should not hinder that effort by holding aloof.

Do not let those little thoughts of high rate of Income Tax, rising costs, lack of bonus for many of you, or other similar reasons deter you from the great effort. Your colleagues have had these discomforts and yet have doggedly kept on. What about standing shoulder to shoulder with them?—it's not too late. Your Collection Liaison Officer is only too willing to supply information.

H. S. PALLANT,
Chief Liaison Officer.

O WAD SOME POWER

"She was a new freighter on her first crossing. The crew were British, with their homes in the U.K., and one Canadian. We brought a deck-load of airplanes and trucks, and wheat in the holds. As soon as we tied up at the dock three or four Customs men came aboard to question us and search the ship.

A seaman had five boxes of matches he paid ten cents a box for on the other side. He was allowed one box duty free, and asked to pay a shilling a box duty on the other four. He said he didn't see why he should pay the duty, when he had bought the matches with his own wages, and matches were scarce in England. The Customs took the four boxes away from him. They allowed us 200 cigarettes duty free. One seaman threw 300 cigarettes overboard rather than pay duty or let the Customs have them. To round off their afternoon, the Customs went digging in the bunkers, and found nothing but coal.

When the planes and trucks and some of the wheat had been unloaded, we went on up the canal to another port, where the rest of the wheat was to be taken out. On the way it got dark, and we tied up, and again the Customs came aboard. We left at daylight. We reached the port, where the rest of the wheat was to be unloaded, about noon, when another batch of Customs men began a new search. They spent several hours looking in the ventilators, steering engines, the guns, the magazine and other places, but found nothing dutiable.

When Merchant Navymen are on the other side, they get some of their pay in Canadian or U.S. dollars, and they buy matches, cigarettes, lighters, chocolate, tinned meat and fish—any of the things that are needed at home. One box of matches and 200 cigarettes don't last very long. And what they bring with them they bring at their own risk. If their ship is sunk on the way, they generally lose it all. It looks to them as if the authorities would sooner have them spend their Canadian and U.S. dollars on women and whiskey in America, instead of bringing the things that are needed at home. Some of the able-bodied Customs men who dig for tobacco in the coal-bunkers would do a better war job at sea as trimmers, or in the mines, where they could help to relieve the coal shortage."

—"Tribune," October 2nd, 1942.

"A word in fine about those despised and forgotten men whose job it is to make sure that you are neither a spy nor a smuggler. I can conceive of no more trying and tiring a job than to sit at an airport and examine passengers and their effects in war-time. These men can never relax, and so rarely (I suppose) do they have the excitement of getting "a kill." Their courtesy and kindness marks Britain's last send-off to her visitors as they were the first welcome to them. May we never underrate the importance of their job nor of the way they do it."

—"Catholic Herald," October, 1942.

Ad Alstra

Straight was his choice; easily, finally,
He rolled up his pack of common-place things,
And out in the blue of lake-land and prairie,
Won to his breast the silver of wings.
Measuring life from day-time to day-time,
Preciously living each sweet brimming hour,
His were the fields of flickering flack-light,
Alleys of death, precarious power.
Sad fell the notes of friends not returning,
Stories of star-dust and hazards too tall,
Till he from the night stepped easily, finally,
Away from the wrangling rest of us all.
Keep faith then ye plain-lands, till out of the gloom,
We, too, cross the causeway, abaft of the moon.

JOHN KENNEDY

BAR SAGA

"Aye," said Stanley, "wonderful people, the Yanks."

The sweet touch of the sou'-west breeze was a caress after the heavy pall in the "Mariners'" smokeroom. Old Sol was chucking a dying chest. The glory of his going smudged the sharp lines of warehouses, cranes, yards, funnels, and softened all in a thousand pastels.

An hour before I had gathered up the last of my King Edwards, proud product of a war allotment, and (Herself being at First Aid) had decided on a practical demonstration of the theory that refreshment should follow labour. Wherefore I had placed my feet alternately and rapidly one in front of the other, until I came to rest in the smokeroom of the "Mariners." The mature maiden in attendance, enquiring my wants by the lift of an eyebrow, was a stranger to me. "Peggy?" she tartly answered me. "Peggy's in the Wrens—called up over a week ago." Chastened, I added one more to the mounting personal score of Hitler's misdeeds.

A solitary Bass seemed imminent when I spied Stan Brown darkly ensconced in a settee corner, and doubled the order. Here was company and something of the doings beyond the seas, for Stanley, well thought of in many tramp steamers, knew well the far cities. Moreover, he was spendthrift with words, colourful in description, and it was seven or eight months since I had seen him. He was as pleased to see me, and in ten lubricated minutes, slaked and receptive, he had me afloat, well held in the long rollers of the Western Ocean. Other ships were around in orderly procession; big steamers well spaced and grey greyhounds which ran the invisible outer track. Pleasant days there were, and quiet nights when, Stan said, it seemed rather silly to turn in "all standing" and with life jacket on. It wasn't silly. Three hours before a dawn, in a chill drizzle, corvettes slid about swiftly, and there were heavy booms. Tension held awhile, then eased with light a scant hour away. But, when Sol pushed exploring fingers into the eastern sky, Stan and 18 others were in the port lifeboat, cursing the loss of their kits at the hands of the undersea Hun. Stan spoke of those others, some of whom I knew. "Good mates," he said; "fine mates." Seven times more they saw the sunrise from that crowded craft. Then a coastguard cutter, skilled in such work, hauled them aboard. This procedure Stan explained in some detail. There was then, he said, a doctor—a real doctor. Then soup in little cups; chicken or beefsteak or extract—all as the doctor ordered. Warm baths, bunks and clean blankets, kindness in abundance, eagerly given. "Wonderful people, the Yanks," said Stanley.

They landed at Norfolk, Virginia, and partook of the best. A good suit of blue; underwear, boots, socks, overcoat—a brand-new suitcase, American pattern—all free, and with good heart. "Marvellous people," said Stanley, and began a description of a Pullman coach in which they had ridden to New York. Suddenly he stopped. Three men in khaki had entered the "Mariners'" smokeroom. Two had inverted stripes on their coat sleeves. All had brass letters U.S. on the roll of their collars. They looked easily around and made for a small table in our corner. Approaching, they stopped dead. That was when Stanley stopped. Have you ever seen a negro change colour? Stan did, then. In one swift movement he rose, finished his Bass and went out. I followed more slowly and disquieted. Outside, I ranged alongside Stan, as good a darkie donkeyman as ever opened a steam valve, and was lost for words.

"Aye," he repeated, running puzzled fingers through his woolly hair, "wonderful people, the Yanks."

TYRCONNEL.

MISCELLANEOUS.

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