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## PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

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MONTHLY

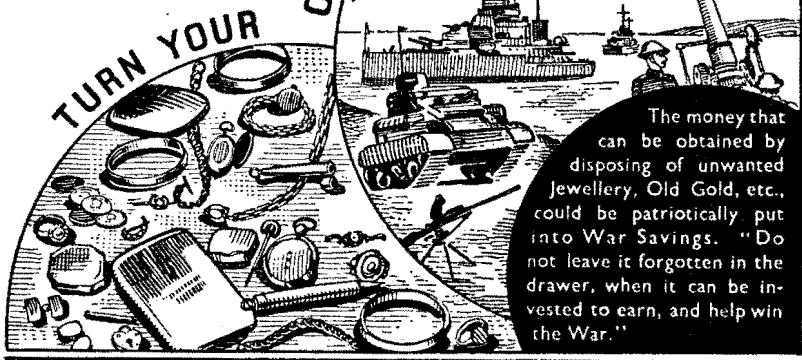
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## Port Talbot News

Members of this department will be pleased and proud to learn that the Watguard were represented by Trevor Williams, A.P.O., now Pilot-Officer, in the low-level daylight raid on Eindhoven in the early part of December.

Our worthy colleague, radiating an exuberance of dash and fighting spirit, visited the Port Talbot staff on the 17th December, when, by gentle persuasion, they were able to gather particulars of his part in the operation.

Thank you, Trevor. You have, I am certain, the best wishes of us all in your future operations, and our deepest gratitude for your hazardous work on our behalf. H.E.P.B.

## PORT TALBOT PROSECUTIONS

At a special sitting of the Port Talbot Police Court, on the 30th December, 1942, Llewellyn Jenkins, manager of the Irish section of Messrs. Gueret, Llewellyn & Merrett, Ltd., Cardiff; Nelson Merrett, manager of the Port Talbot Branch of Messrs. Gueret, Llewellyn & Merrett, Ltd.; and John Stribling, Master of a British cargo ship, were jointly charged with attempting to export prohibited goods, to wit, 1,421 hosiery latch needles (valued £70), to Eire.

The goods were discovered by Mr. H. E. P. Bevan, P.O., packed in a Rowntree's cocoa economy packet among books, papers, clothes and other paraphernalia littering the master's bunk. Further investigations were carried out by Mr. J. H. Atwill, C.P.O., and Mr. A. Griffin, Watguard Superintendent, both of whom also appeared as witnesses for the prosecution.

The case for the Crown was conducted by Mr. E. A. R. Llewellyn, of the Solicitor's Office, and counsel for the defence was Mr. Carey Evans, of Cardiff.

Although a keen and ingenious defence was offered—the proceedings lasting two and a half hours—the offenders were convicted and respectively fined £25, plus £5 5s. costs, £2 and £1.

## CHANGES IN THE STAFF

to 4th JANUARY, 1943.

### TRANSFERS.

#### PREVENTIVE OFFICER—

Caley, J., Glasgow to Larne, Belfast.

#### PREVENTIVE OFFICER (ACTING)—

Love, W. N., from special service at Goraghowood, Belfast, to Holyhead, Chester.

#### ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS—

Henderson, R. M., Leith to Liverpool.

Parsons, W. A., Southampton to Swansea.

#### DEATHS—

##### PREVENTIVE OFFICERS—

Percival, J., London.

Robertson, J., Liverpool.

##### ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER—

Precious, F., Dover.

### OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS.

Forth, F. J., Preventive Officer.

Fry, O. A., Assistant Preventive Officer.

Reynolds, W. F., Preventive Man.

Wood, J. T., Preventive Officer.

## OBITUARY

### MR. JAMES ROBERTSON, LIVERPOOL.

It came as a great shock to his many friends when they learned on the morning of Wednesday, December 2nd, the circumstances of his death the previous evening. He had been working alone and had just left one of H.M. ships to return to the office, and in the darkness and fog must have taken a false step with such terrible results.

We were as grieved as his would-be rescuers to learn that the efforts made to save him proved unsuccessful, and we heartily endorse the Bootle Coroner's tribute to their gallant conduct. Our sincere sympathy goes out to his relatives in their sudden bereavement.

"Jock" was well liked by all with whom he came in contact, and his fine sportsmanship, broad accent and quaint sayings have left with us a memory that will not readily be forgotten.

He served with distinction with the Black Watch Regiment as part of the famous 51st Division in the last war, being severely wounded, and it seems tragic that he should lose his life in this way during the present struggle.

Thus he joins the large number who have lost their life in similar manner in this very same dock since the beginning of the war, and once again the little-realised dangers of our work under present conditions are brought home to us very forcibly.

Following the inquest reported above, his body was removed to his home at Pitlochry, Perthshire, for interment in his native heath, a wreath from his colleagues accompanying it as a last tribute. W.C.H.

### MR. F. PRECIOUS, A.P.O.

At 11 a.m. on Tuesday, 15th December, 1942, Mr. F. Precious, late A.P.O., Inverness, was laid to rest at Stranton Cemetery, West Hartlepool, after a short but solemn service in St. Aidan's Church, West Hartlepool. The coffin had arrived from Inverness and laid in the church overnight, covered with the Customs flag. Members of the West Hartlepool Watguard attended the funeral, and representatives from the P.O. and A.P.O. grades, in uniform, acted as bearers. A wreath, suitably inscribed, was placed on the grave from the West Hartlepool Watguard and Long Room staffs.

Mr. Precious leaves a young widow.

Mr. Precious was drowned in the black-out at Inverness during the execution of his duty. Before going on Detached Duty, his previous posts were West Hartlepool and Dover, and his untimely end came as a great shock to all who knew him at both these ports.

The deep and sincere sympathy of the West Hartlepool Watguard staff and, indeed, of all Watguard Officers, will go out to his young widow, his parents and brothers in this tragic loss of a young officer due entirely to the execution of duties in wartime. J. B.



# CURRENT COMMENTS

1943

**B**y the time these notes appear the New Year will be well under way, and most, if not all, of those good resolutions will have been broken—or even forgotten. There is one resolution, however, which must not be broken and never forgotten—your resolution to bring at least one non-member into the Association. Perhaps you did not make a resolution in these terms. You overlooked it, maybe, but don't let that bother you—*make it now.*

Of course, there are not nearly enough non-members to go round, so it will be a question of the first come, the first served. Better get hold of old "so-and-so" before the other chaps get busy. If there should be a snag in the form of arrears, just get the District Organiser to drop a line to Bob Farmer.

\* \* \* \*

### WATERGUARD SECTIONAL COMMITTEE

The meeting of the Waterguard Sectional Committee has been arranged for the 19th January. Too late, we are afraid, for inclusion herein of a report of the proceedings.

The new Chairman, in succession to Mr. J. B. Hardie, is Mr. A. H. Garrett, and we extend to him a very sincere welcome into the Waterguard sphere of Departmental activity.

In addition to the matters outstanding on the agenda and the six new references quoted in the last issue, there is a further new reference, "War Staffing arrangements in the Waterguard." This is not so much a new matter as a step to regularise the arrangements already informally agreed but not, unfortunately, uniformly applied.

\* \* \* \*

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (P.S.A.)

The Quarterly meeting of the full Executive Committee (P.S.A.) takes place at the C. and E. Federation Offices, Water House, Strand, London, on the 28th and 29 January.

\* \* \* \*

### BILLETING AT LIVERPOOL

Little news is available on the claim that Customs and Excise staff, conditioned to awkward and irregular hours of duty, should not be included in the normal billeting arrangements at Liverpool. All that our most recent enquiry elicited was that the matter was with the Treasury.

\* \* \* \*

### POST-WAR ORGANISATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

The National Staff Side has adopted a proposal that a Committee be appointed to consider and make recommendations concerning the post-war organisation of the Civil Service. Further, that such committee be instructed to invite evidence from individuals and organisations outside the Civil Service whose knowledge and opinion might be of assistance.

A tremendous lot has been said on this matter recently in the Houses of Parliament and in the Press, but in the main it has been rather one-sided. It is good to see the Staff Side of Civil Service Whitley prepared to examine this vast and important issue.

\* \* \* \*

### THE BEVERIDGE REPORT

The Ministry of Health Departmental Whitley Council Staff Side have arranged for Sir William Beveridge, K.C.B., F.B.A., to address Civil Servants on his Report. The meeting takes place at Central Hall, Westminster, London, on Thursday, the 28th January, at 12.45 p.m. sharp.

Undoubtedly, Sir William's address will be most interesting, but we have an idea that what follows the speech will be even more so. Sir William invites questions, and his answers should fill in many gaps in the Report as applied to Civil Servants, or perhaps we should say that his answers will dash the hopes or confirm the fears of those who have been backing "vested rights."

\* \* \* \*

### BONUS INCREASE FOR JUVENILES

A recent agreement on the National Whitley Council provides for an increase in the rate of war bonus for whole-time Civil Servants who are under 21 years of age. As from the 1st December last the old bonus figure of 6s. 6d. a week is to be increased to 7s. 6d. in the case of officers aged 19, and to 8s. at the age of 20.

\* \* \* \*

### BOOT'S BOOK-LOVERS' LIBRARY

Members are reminded that the Book-lovers' Library year terminates at the end of January, and those who intend to carry on will have to complete renewal forms.

The 1st February is also a good time for new members to enrol and take advantage of the very favourable terms extended to our members.

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Forms of application and renewal can be obtained only through your District Organiser. Applications to Association Headquarters (other than those from retired members) will be entertained only if endorsed by the D.O. and accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope.

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### HOSPITALITY OFFERED TO THE STAFF IN H.M. FORCES.

Hospitality is offered by the parents of the lads in the Forces, and also by certain members of the staff, to all of our Service colleagues who care to avail themselves of same. The list of addresses is printed below, so do not hesitate to go along and have an enjoyable time with our warm-hearted friends:—

- Mr. and Mrs. Bishop, 196, Algernon Road, Lewisham, S.E.13.
- Mr. and Mrs. Blake, 27, Lyndhurst Gardens, Glasgow, N.W.
- Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs, 209, Heysham Road, Morecambe, Lancs.
- Mr. and Mrs. Buttenshaw, 41, Marine Parade, Sheerness, Kent.
- Mr. and Mrs. Dowdell, 59, Crossways, Portchester, Hants.
- Mr. and Mrs. Edney, "Sunny Brae," Highwalls, Dinas Powis, Glam.
- Mr. and Mrs. Farmer, 21, Richmond Crescent, Londonderry.
- Mr. and Mrs. Ford, 82, Bromesfield, Stanmore, Middlesex.
- Mr. and Mrs. Hartshorn, 99, Ferguson Avenue, Gidea Park, Essex.
- Mr. and Mrs. Kippin, 6a, Broadway Mansions, Station Road, Upminster, Essex.
- Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie, 8, Picardy Place, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Mr. and Mrs. Perryman, "Summerfield," St. Marychurch Road, Torquay, Devon.
- Mr. and Mrs. Skinner, 1, Regent Road, Crosby, Lancs.
- Mr. and Mrs. Vigeon, 27, Park Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent.
- Mr. and Mrs. Weeks, 27, Knighton Drive, Woodford, Essex.

## Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and fifty-seventh meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 16th December, 1942, the Chair being taken by Sir Archibald Carter, Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

### OLD AGE PENSIONS WORK.

The Official Side intimated that they had been in communication with the Assistance Board, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, and on receipt of information from these Departments a circular had been issued on 1st December inviting applications for the posts available for the volunteer Women Pension Officer transferees. As a result, interviews were being urgently arranged, thirty volunteers would be interviewed by the Ministry of Labour next week and a number by the Ministry of Health; further interviews would shortly be held.

The Council considered the report on the informal meeting held on 24th November to discuss the points raised by the Staff Side at the November Council meeting. Decisions reached at the informal meeting were confirmed by the Council.

### PROMOTION AND TRANSFER QUESTIONS.

(a) Staff Side Proposal that Officers successful at the last two Surveyorship Examinations, but not yet appointed to the Surveyor Grade, be given a presumed date of appointment based for each of these Officers on the date upon which a vacancy would normally have occurred in the Surveyor Grade, such presumed date to govern salary and conditions of service at the date of actual appointment to that Grade.

Since the last Council meeting the Staff Side had supplemented their argument in a letter dated 4th December, as follows:—

It was indicated at the Council that normally the number of candidates declared successful at Surveyorship Examinations approximated to the vacancies in the Surveyor Grade likely to arise during the ensuing two years, and that generally they were appointed to the pool of Unattached Surveyors each Spring. On this basis the 44 "successfuls" at the 1939 examination would have been absorbed into the Surveyor Grade before the end of 1941.

The actual position is that of the 44 "successfuls" at the 1939 examination, 21 are still in the Officer Grade, and of the 23 who have been appointed to the Surveyor Grade, the last eight were so appointed in March, 1941 (O.W.O. 12/41). Since that date there have been no further promotions.

The examination held in 1940—at which 12 were declared successful—would normally have been held in 1941, to meet the requirements for 1942-1943, so far as they could have been met from that source.

It is the Staff Side's view that the conditions governing promotion from the Officer Grade warrant exceptional treatment for the "successfuls" still to be promoted. These Officers were not eligible to sit for the examination until they had completed 18 years' service in the grade, and they are all now over 40 years of age. The examination itself required an extensive period of fairly intensive study, and the right to promotion and the benefits it brings are regarded as being well earned.

The delay in appointment causes obvious hardship, both immediate and long-term, and the individuals concerned have already borne an earlier hardship of prolonged "Unattached" service.

It is as a means of securing some easement that the Staff Side are asking for presumed dates of appointment, determined by what would have been normal retirements from the Surveyor Grade.

"Notional" dates are not foreign to our Department, they were applied immediately after the last war to entrants to the Officer Grade under the Reconstruction Scheme, and also to some open competition entrants where the delay in taking up appointment was due to the war.

It is understood that a similar procedure is being adopted for entrants to the Officer Grade from the open competitive examination held in January, 1939.

The Official Side did not regard the circumstances behind the present claim as distinctly analogous to those attendant on the notional dates applied to Reconstruction Entrants, to the Open-Competition Entrants (1914 and 1915) or the Open-Competition Entrants (January, 1939). In the latter cases service with H.M. Forces precluded the taking up of existing posts, but the present proposal was for a notional date of appointment to posts which did not in fact exist.

The Staff Side emphasised that but for the war the promotion posts would have existed. They had not suggested that the "notional date" arrangements were distinctly analogous; they had been given as an indication how war-time conditions had necessitated exceptional treatment.

The Official Side were satisfied that there was no prospect of the extension of the idea of "notional" promotion on the lines suggested; similar proposals involving the extension of the principle had been made in other Departments and had been rejected. This issue was regarded as a general Service problem.

The Council re-adjourned the item for further examination by both Sides.

(b) **Retirement: Effect on Promotion of Re-employment or Deferment.**—The Official Side intimated that six Chief Clerks and one Senior Chief Clerk surplus to requirements had now been given notice of retirement.

(c) **Upgrading of Temporary Clerks, Grade III.**—The Official Side intimated that with a few exceptions the sixty-seven posts determined as appropriate to Grade II had been filled, and that as regards the determination of the grading of fifty-nine further posts a circular would shortly be issued for guidance of the Collectors. A further meeting of the informal Committee would be necessary.

The item was re-adjourned.

(d) **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 Official Side stated that as a result of their examination of this proposal five names had been sent forward for consideration by the Treasury.

The Staff Side noted this announcement with pleasure and hoped that good results would follow.

### REMUNERATION FOR EXTRA WORK PERFORMED BY CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENTAL GRADES.

The Staff Side had since the last Council meeting submitted a letter dated 11th December, 1942, claiming that the salaries and conditions of service of the Departmental Grades concerned, i.e., The Controlling Grade, Surveyors, Women Pension Surveyors, Waterguard Superintendents and Inspectors, Waterguard Surveyors, Senior Chief Clerks and Chief Clerks, had been determined departmentally, and that their experience and remuneration did not conform to general Civil Service standards. They said that the differences had been emphasised by the difficulties experienced in persuading other Departments to accept members of these grades for transfer. They further claimed that the day-to-day work of these grades was not conditioned to a regular office routine, but was to some extent dependent on the requirements of the trading community and the public, and in the present circumstances by the problems arising from war-time conditions. The Staff Side had further stated that payment of "allowances" for additional work to Officers in Excise Stations and to Women Pension Officers had been regarded as anomalous by the Official Side by comparison with the general Civil Service, and that such payment was a recognition of the exceptional conditions imposed upon those grades who did not normally receive overtime pay.

The Staff Side now observed that the 51-hour week had been extended to all grades in Collectors' Offices, and that, in addition to the extra work consequent upon the extended hours in the basic grades, war-time had raised new problems resulting in additional work and longer hours in other grades, e.g., Women Pension Surveyors, Waterguard Superintendents, Inspectors and Surveyors, in the Surveyor Grade and in the Controlling Grade. These grades are not overtime grades and normally are not required to work extra hours.

The Official Side were unable to appreciate any difference between this Department and other Departments so far as the longer hours due to the exigencies of war-time were concerned, and they felt quite sure that any representations made for increased remuneration to the Departmental grades in the Customs and Excise Department would meet with no success.

whatever. Before the war there was a fairly well-established distinction between overtime and non-overtime grades, and this distinction applied to war-time remuneration for overtime. In this connection reference might be made to the recent rejection by the Civil Service Arbitration Tribunal of a claim by certain non-overtime grades for extra remuneration for additional war-time work. With regard to the allowances to Officers in unit Stations these were designed to meet the position of a grade which was already partly an overtime grade. The Staff Side said that Officers were normally schemed to a 44-hour week, and that the extra remuneration now claimed for the grades mentioned should be justified by comparison therewith. They considered, for example, that Chief Clerks and Senior Chief Clerks in Collectors' Offices should have extra remuneration for the additional hours worked in like manner to the Departmental Clerical Officers and Departmental Higher Clerical Officers therein. The general position of the grades for whom the claim was made was worsened by delayed retirements, etc., arising from the war.

The Official Side considered that it would be fruitless to put forward such a claim as the Staff Side had made.

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

**STAFF SIDE PROPOSAL THAT ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES BE TAKEN TO MAKE USE OF THE WELL-ESTABLISHED MACHINERY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF ANY NEW WAR-TIME GOVERNMENTAL DUTIES.**

The Official Side said that representations had been made in the proper quarter and would be borne in mind in connection with any suitable new work which might arise.

**LOCAL WHITLEY.**

One agreement was referred back to the Local Committee, and two disagreements on units were remitted to the Committee dealing with G.O. 32/41 disagreements.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on 27th January, 1943.

## One to Another

Usual Address,

M.E.F.,

Dec. 31st, 1942.

Dear Joe,

I was delighted to hear from you for Christmas. At the same time I received the "C.J." November issue, and as I am writing to thank Battshaw for their very true parable, The Customs Carol. I am asking them to pass this on to save stamps. Have to save money, as I intend to marry Shirley when the war is over. She is busy on munitions, and as you have no kiddies I daresay your wife is doing something in the same line just now. Meanwhile, you have all the pleasures of a regular domestic life, I'm glad to hear. That is only one of the many things we miss out here, including Christmas puddings and "waxers." So, if your Christmas was austere, oh, boy, it couldn't be as austere as ours. In fact, England and Christmas seemed immensely far away, even when we listened to the radio and heard the King so clearly. I am keeping very fit, and, as usual, am looking forward to some mail. You have no idea how different the days seem when there are letters from home to be read and re-read when the day is over and we can take it easy. I lie back on my groundsheet and simply absorb those letters from start to finish. Hasten the glad day of our return and some good old watch-house larks, with yarns to swap and a future to work and plan for. Keep the old flag flying, and we'll take a more practical part in staff activity than we did before 1939.

Remember, the Forces are looking to you to protect their interests and make things better for the day of their return. Many a time have I been grateful for your helping hand, which steadied my impulsive outlook upon life, pre-war; and I am relying on you to put your weight behind the P.S.A. efforts to-day. Being so far away, Joe, gives one a sense of proportion. You would be astonished with what interest I read the old "C.J.," so sadly cut down. I also closely read an old copy of "Red Tape," and found the Gen. Sec. of the C.S.C.A. saying something to the effect that the best way to avoid military service is, at times, to join the Army! Well,

I thought that for a long time, as I did fatigues or attended boring lectures or tapped a typewriter in the Orderly Room; but now I reckon I know something about military service. I know, too, that you people at home have by no means escaped the war, and I think it marvellous that our service, so often operating right inside the target area, should have carried on. To do a day's work or a night's work in the Waterguard and to do Home Guard or some similarly necessary job in your off-duty hours is by no means "taking no part in the war effort." I can understand you using those words, but, as I say, I can see it differently. The Waterguard collects money to win the war for one thing. Then the Security job and the control you perform is most important. Please don't minimise it. You should have had a greater share of that sort of thing, true, and some of our fellows probably think in old-fashioned "plug of hard" terms, but yours really is a most important job. And when a job is important, all the people doing the job are of equal value. That answers your other "moan," I think. I hate the phrase "failed A.P.O." Do you ever hear bank clerks called "failed managers" or bricklayers called "failed foremen"? Are privates in the Army "failed Sergeants"? I can assure you that in every barrack-room there is an "old sweat" who knows more about fighting and military routine (called "spit and polish" by ignorant blokes) than anyone else there; but no one looks down on him because he has not a stripe. Far from it. Not only a rookie, but many a Sergt.-Major turns to him for advice in tight corners. Maybe no P.O. has ever turned to you for advice. But is that entirely the P.O.s fault? Would you welcome such a thing, or do you not, rather, go about your duties doing exactly what you're told, often aloof, or in a sulky way? Have you not shown resentment at times to the more fortunate ones? (It is nothing more than good luck, we know; there just can't be as many officers as privates, nor as many P.O.s as A.P.O.s). Excuse my frankness. I take advantage of being so far away, perhaps.

Suppose the "old sweats" I have mentioned were about to go into battle, say the Battle of Alamein, and suddenly recalled that they were quite as good as the sergeants, and a damn sight better than the lieutenants. Lieutenants are, like C.P.O.s, fair game. Suppose an "old sweat" refused to advance in battle because the sergeant had got promotion through a wangle, or was better educated, or was a buyer of drinks for officers (impossible situation, I know, but still—no more impossible than some of the reasons given for not paying subs.) or had joined in the right year, or had once spoken crossly to him on the parade ground? Would not Rommel rub his hands in glee?

I don't intend to compare the Official Side with the Germans, but the Association is fighting a battle, and that battle cannot be won if you, Joe, fall down on your ordinary job, or if you fail to march behind the Association leaders. The least you can do is to pay your subs, and give up petty criticism. That is the equivalent to the Army's keeping buttons clean. If that was all a soldier did he would not be much damned good. Take an active part in your Association, and then, if it is true (which it isn't) that the Association can do nothing for you, you'll make it do something. As for doing the job properly, what I mean by that is that the "bad lads" in our job are a greater hindrance to our improving ourselves than all the Official Sides. 'Nuff said, but I won't finish with the Association yet because you also used the remark in your letter, "I've paid plenty already and never had anything out of it." My answer, first, is if you only got protection, individually and as a member of a body, for your tanner a week you've had a good return. (Think what other unionists pay; printers often a pound a week, and similarly in the U.S.A.!) But, believe me, brother, there's no Whitley in the Army, and you get plenty besides. This letter is already long, but I had to say a few words, really, on that point, as one who would himself willingly pay his subs, if asked. And don't forget, old-timer, there are other A.P.O.s: some already passed and waiting years for promotion, others fourteen years in the service and with no prospect of being called, who's also got a moan; but they pay their subs.

Well! must say cheerio now, so all the best to you, Joe, and your good lady, for 1943, and write soon.

Sincerely yours,

GINGER S.

## Southampton Notes

"So far and yet so near to our hearts" is the message borne by the M.E.F. card of greeting, Christmas, 1942, and it expresses our feelings at this season, the fourth New Year of the war. Greetings from the lads so widely scattered have poured in since mid-December, and we pass along their good wishes to all of you, home and overseas. Those at their stations in this country, and the exiles, join in the general expressions of remembrance, and we make a start on the 1943 Notes by wishing you all well throughout the year ahead.

Ernie Soane, in his welcome annual letter, sends good news of his well-being from Scotland (a bit fresh under canvas these days!), after a round of the Counties, toughening up. Scottish hospitality is gratefully acknowledged.

Steve is still A.1 in London, and is likely to make early contact with Doug. Joy, now stationed in the Metropolis with the I.C. Another I.C. laddie, Jimmy Rough, was recently seen in Barrow, and Jack Langford, still footballing, is now permanently stationed at Holyhead. Johnny Walker is back in the Midlands after his East Coast spell, and from the Middle East we have good news of Bill Sykes, progressing well with the triumphal 8th Army.

Navy news, thankfully, is as cheering as ever. Jimmy James, well on the job in Arctic surroundings, comments airily upon experiences which must have been pretty grim at times. To the mention of an early 1943 reunion we reply, "We'll be there, Jimmy boy."

Bill Foot writes pleasingly of his meeting with Cliff, and of his own well-being and activities in the Cape; he just missed Joe, unfortunately, on a previous trip. Bill sends news of the well-being of Sub-Lieut. Hewitt, F.A.A., which will be welcome on Merseyside, as will the news of Sub-Lieut. J. Abbott, R.N., now with Combined Operations and very fit.

Cliff, to whom thanks for the second issue of his ship's excellent Magazine, writes of a recent combat with a puff-adder, which received "curtains" by means of tree branch wielded by our Lancashire lad, and Joe, fatter than ever, took a broadside from Cupid when in the Cape! Recent improvements in mail delivery give Cliff and Joe more scope for writing, and as another of the lads writes, "Mail is such a blessing when miles away from home, and even the shortest note is most welcome." How about making a seasonable resolution right away?

Ted Midlane sends good news from Scotland, likewise Stan Roberts, also up there. The R.A.F. boys remain well, but we had a disappointment with news that Les Twentyman, deferring the chance of a commission, had been drafted Eastwards instead of Westwards, as he had so fondly anticipated in his letters. A Christmas cable from the Middle East confirmed his well-being, and we are glad to know he is A.1.

Phil Pettit, looking forward to a jolly festive time in Scotland, is well; we send our congratulations upon the arrival of a young Phil. Good news indeed. A delayed air mail from Ron Greenhalgh conveyed news of his congenial spell in Latin spheres, which he may have left by the time you read this, and Xmas mail from Dudley Heal indicates that he spent his Christmas at home, lucky chap. Peter Ryan writes at some length on his Service activities, which have included plenty of sport. He is well and likes the life, spent, up to date, in the South-West. Having passed his I.T.W. tests, Peter is now due to undergo flight instruction. New Year's Eve saw his proudest possession sadly reduced in its flowing qualities, and he now sports a smaller version! We are hoping to see Jack Welsh again, early January, before he moves along to his next billet.

Exiles, and we are glad to know that: Don Radford is A.1 at Stranraer; Mr. Foley, P.O., is still finding Leith "sunny"; Bill Parsons has slipped in for a Swansea vacancy (he'll be missed at Holyhead); Bob Greenman still remembers us all the way from Swansea; Bert Fry and Button Field are still holding Runcorn down; Paddy O'Boyle is recuperating from a nasal operation.

Home news, and greetings to you all from the lads, headed by Fred Farthing. We are glad to know of Len Bassett's pneumonia recovery, and wish an old friend in Mr. J. A. Barrett, P.O., a speedy return from sick leave. Otherwise, all's well.

Cheerio, Forces!

L.B.

## Merseyside News

Word comes from Canada of L.A.C. Bert Ralph, who is now at a Service Flying Training School in Saskatchewan, where he is putting the finishing touches to his training as a Bomber Pilot. He hopes to receive his wings early in the New Year, and later to fly back and be posted to Coastal Command. He tells of a marvellous nine days' leave between courses, spent half at a holiday camp on the shores of a Canadian lake and half in Winnipeg, seeing the sights. Best of luck, Bert, and may all your ambitions be realised.

Friends of Mr. Harold Anson, A.P.O., will be as pleased as he was to hear of the award to his brother, Chief Steward G. H. Anson, M.N., of the British Empire Medal for conspicuous gallantry in tackling fires aboard his ship, which carried explosives, when she was attacked by enemy aircraft.

The first Departmental Social Event for over three and a half years was held in the Restaurant, fifth floor, Cunard Buildings, on Wednesday evening, 2nd December, 1942, when a representative gathering of all grades met to welcome the new Collector, Mr. T. B. Gibson, and enjoy a short Smoking Concert. The evening was pleasantly devoid of all formality, and there were no speeches of any kind.

Tea was served by the Lady Members of the Committee, and while this was being cleared away Mr. Gibson came round the tables in order to meet everybody present. He commented upon the cheery faces among the Waterguard contingent, which was, however, smaller than we would have liked to see present on such an occasion. No doubt the sad news of the day, reported elsewhere, had its effect.

After tea the company settled down to entertainment provided by Members of the Staff; Mr. L. Darby, Officer, acting as M.C. and compère.

Mr. E. E. Harding, P.O., at the piano, started the proceedings with some well-arranged items for community singing, following which Mr. L. S. Histed, Surveyor, ably lived up to the introductory remarks describing him as a "prestidigitator." His patter was also most entertaining. Contrasting items were provided by Miss A. Johnson and Mr. H. Pierce, of the Indoor Staff, with a pianoforte impromptu and baritone solo respectively.

Our old friend, Mr. W. H. Irish, Comedian and Raconteur, enlivened the proceedings in his usual topical and racy style, which always goes down well on these occasions. Repeat items by all the artistes in the second half brought the evening all too quickly to a close.

Congratulations are due to the Organising Committee, who would no doubt feel well pleased at the success of their first war-time effort. It is expected that news of this happy function will travel, and that the next will be an even greater success. Those who were absent missed an enjoyable evening, which provided a very welcome and refreshing change; those who were present are looking forward eagerly to the next occasion.

News of seizures continues to feature the Gladstone Rum-mage Crew, who recently had some half a dozen jobs on the same vessel, amounting to close on 20 lbs. of tobacco. Mr. R. A. Billett, A.P.O., had the best, one of 6½ lbs., the owner being duly convicted and fined at Liverpool Police Court.

A unique case which came to light last week concerned an Allied seaman who for some reason wished to get off the ship on which he was serving. He conceived the novel expedient of stowing away a small quantity of tobacco goods, which he readily owned when they were found. He refused to pay the compromise penalty, electing to be tried before a magistrate, and when, as he expected, he was fined, he planned to refuse also to pay the fine, figuring that he would receive the alternative of a month's imprisonment, thereby enabling him to miss his ship. Unfortunately, as so often happens, the best-laid schemes of mice and men oft gang a-glee, and in this case the vessel developed engine trouble, necessitating a lengthy stay in port. The offender, therefore, elected to pay the fine.

BILL HUGHES.

## OVERHEARD ON THE CLYDE

"I tell ye it's no' Navy Commandoes back frae a raid, they're Customs Officers. They dinna get new uniform when there's a warr on."

## Greenock News

Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to Mr. Girling, C.P.O., who arrived to take up his duties in Greenock to find a letter waiting for him announcing the tragic death of his sister in a fire at her home in Dovercourt. It appears that her daughter was saved, although badly burnt, and we join in wishing her a full and speedy recovery.

### Association Meeting

A P.S.A. meeting was held at Princes Pier on 18th November, mainly for the purpose of discussing the "Winter Scheme" for the port put forward by the Official Side since the meeting of 5th November. The meeting was well attended, there being present ten P.O.s and thirteen A.P.O.s.

The old scheme, if one may call a fortnight-old scheme "old," dispensed with the A.P.O.s on the Quarantine launch, and provided for two boarding crews on each station, 6/2 and 2/10 respectively in the summer, and 9/5 together on the same launch in the winter. This scheme of having two crews on the one launch was tried out last winter, and was found to be not without defects. Apart from the fact of having two "captains" on one boat providing a permanent basis for possible friction, it was often found that one launch was no more able than one man to serve two masters, and the net amount of work done was often less than would have been performed by one crew alone.

The new "Winter Scheme" supersedes what I have called the "old scheme" before the latter has yet been put into operation. The net result is the ratification of the main body of the present scheme, thus retaining the A.P.O.s on Quarantine, and retaining the principle of "One Crew, One Launch." Staff redundant from the boarding stations help to fill additional dock, rummage, and telephone duties, including Sundays. Looked at purely from the hard cash angle, this scheme appears to be slightly more advantageous to the staff than any previous scheme; from the point of view of getting the job done with efficiency, equanimity and relative economy, it would appear to be about as perfect as three years' hard experience can make it.

It seems to be the accepted thing that the Staff Side should always disagree on principle with any suggestions from the Official Side, and vice versa. Moreover, it is safe to assume that our Winter Scheme owes some measure of its perfection to frequent criticisms, complaints and suggestions from the staff—made mostly, let it be said in all fairness, rather with the idea of increasing efficiency than of mere personal comfort or gain. Nevertheless, this seems to be an occasion where the Official Side, in the person of the Waterguard Surveyor, can be unreservedly congratulated for devising a scheme which shows such comprehension both of the job to be done and the problems of the men who have to do it. This was reflected in the manner in which, apart from three dissentients who had been defeated on an amendment, the motion to accept the scheme en bloc was carried with obvious warmth.

The vexed question of the "selected rummage crew" was raised and well thrashed out; the meeting finally deciding unanimously that while there was no objection to special officers being selected more or less permanently for various office duties, for such reasons as poor health or advancing years, the principle of special selection applied to such duties as it must be assumed all able-bodied officers were capable of performing, might become a dangerous precedent, and that there was nothing which, once it had been applied without complaint to rummage duties, might prevent it being equally applied to all other duties as well. Consequently, our representatives were instructed to press for the rummage crews to rotate in the normal manner, and to take the matter to Whitley if necessary.

The P.O. Whitley Representative reported on a case which will be of interest to officers on Detached Duty. An officer's minuted summer leave period of twelve days began two or

three days before the commencement of his third year of detached duty. He had already made two visits home during his second year, and therefore, by travelling home at the commencement of his leave, was, technically, making a third visit in one year, although, of course, the return half of his ticket would be utilised in the following year of D.D. Having received an advance for his full fare, he naturally presumed it safe to travel immediately, but, some time after his return, the A. and C.G. claimed a return of part of his advance as, on the grounds of this technicality, they would only grant an assisted passage. If the officer concerned was in the same dire straits as myself, and probably other D.D. officers as well, such a demand would have caused no small measure of financial embarrassment, especially at a time when one has just had to bear not only the normal expenses of a holiday, but also the cost of transporting one's wife and family from one end of the United Kingdom to the other and back again. Perhaps we are expected to leave them in lodgings and return home alone?

Thanks to the efforts of the Association, the A. and C.G. have now relented in this particular instance and allowed the full fare, but state that they cannot do so again in any future instances. In effect, this means that in order to obtain two free fares every year, detached officers must henceforth take their leave in a later part of the year than the original date of their arrival on detached duty. Not only does this mean that an individual who had the misfortune to start his D.D. in October will be limited to Period 13 for the remainder of his years away from home, but, in the case where a large number of detached officers arrive at a port in a body towards the latter end of the minute, some of them must of necessity forfeit either a visit home or a free fare.

It was also reported that a letter had been sent to the Collector re no issue of uniform.

### Snippet

By the time this appears in print we shall no doubt have bid farewell to Mr. Howard, A.P.O., until recently our Whitley Representative, who has given yet another proof of his persuasive abilities by getting himself returned to his home port. Lucky chap!

### The Month's Best Laugh

A ship arrived recently on which we had heard our late colleague, Bill Pearce, was serving. We enquired from a member of the crew, and were told, "Oh, yes. He was here, but is now in 'jug' for breaking into the storeroom and stealing a quantity of spirits!" Thinking this a rather ignoble end to the career of an A.P.O. to be caught in such an act, further enquiries were made, and it eventually turned out that there had been two Bill Pearces on the ship, and that "our Bill" had left in a more orthodox manner, and was then enjoying a doubtless well-earned spell of leave!

B. A. BENNING.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

Sometimes positions are advertised in the O.W.O.s which are open to the Waterguard.

I suggest that the Collector in each Collection should interview personally all applicants. This would have two points in support.

1. This procedure obviously has more of justice in it than the present system of recommendation by C.P.O.s. and would, at least, satisfy everybody.

2. It would help in the problem of getting the right man for the right job—especially if everyone underwent a suitable Intelligence Test.

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen," etc., is especially true with regard to applicants in small ports.

A.P.O.



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## SONS OF THE SEA

The scene is the messroom of an American steamer at 12.30 p.m. on a dull November day. Hank, a slightly truculent Yankee sailor, is smoking a cigarette, elbows on the table. Slim, a fat Chinese messman, is washing dishes in adjoining pantry. Smith, an elderly Customs Watcher, knocks and enters. He is damp with rain and fog.

Hank: "Who the hell are you? Whaddya want?"

Smith (producing small packet): "Customs Watcher. Can I eat my snack in here?"

Hank: "Guess so. Whaddya watch? Slim, give the guy a cuppa cawfee."

Smith: "Cargo. I keep an eye on things, see?" (Hangs up damp overcoat and sits down.)

Hank: "What's them ribbons for, uh? Customs medals?"

Smith: "Who's leg you pullin'? I used to be in the Navy."

Hank: "British Navy guy, uh? Slim, give the guy some fish chowder. What's that one?"

Smith: "D.C.M. Last war, of course."

Hank: "You don't say. Slim, bring the feller some roast pork 'n' apple 'n' green. Whaddya do for that, buddy?"

Smith: "Oh, not much. We had a hole in the bows, see, when a mine exploded. Somebody had to go down the store to patch up a bit. This pork's O.K., mate. I war mug enough to volunteer an' they threw me the medal, afterwards."

Hank: "Yeah? Bloody hero, uh? Slim, lemon pie for the Admiral. Been some bombs around here. You had any trouble?"

Smith: "Not much. Some in our street had it bad, but we got off with windows broke and ceilings down."

Hank: "Thaddall! Not much, uh? Slim, dig up some ice-cream for the Customs oh-ficial. We eat at noon. You watchin' to-morrow, buddy? Slim, a place for my pal here, to-morrow."

Slim: "Okey-doke. Pal to-morrow."

Smith: "It's very good of you. . . ."

Hank: "Forget it, brother. Have a camel. Now, let's have some more about that mine. . . ."

TYRCONNEL.

## Waterguard Spotlight

"Members of this Department will be pleased to learn that Trevor Williams, A.P., now Pilot-Officer, took part in the low-level daylight raid on Eindhoven in December." —*Port Talbot News*, p. 2.

"A ship arrived recently on which we heard our late colleague, Bill Pearce, was serving. We enquired from a member of the crew, and were told, 'Oh, yes. He was here, but is now in "jug" for breaking into the store-room and stealing spirits!' Further enquiries were made, and it turned out that there had been two Bill Peaces on the ship, and that 'Our Bill' had left in a more orthodox manner, and was enjoying a well-earned spell of leave." —*Greenock News*, p. 8.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

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

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## Hull News

## SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

The social activities of the Port are non-existent at present, but occasional references to happy times in the past and expressed hopes of more to come augur well for the future.

Once again we have to report a depletion in our staff. On the 19th November Mr. Girling, C.P.O., was transferred to Greenock for the duration. We wish him every success and happiness in his new sphere, and hope that the day will not be far distant when he is once again handing out slices of lemon at half-time.

Mr. Pudsey, P.O., recently visited us and reported quite well and happy in his exile. He also brought the same good news of Mr. Roberts, A.P.O. (who is still a carefree bachelor) and Mr. Dorey (now of the Special Inquiry Staff).

A letter from Wireless Telegraphist J. N. White, R.N., informs us that he has a pleasant berth on one of our largest liners, and is generally enjoying his life afloat.

L.A.C. C. P. Rawcliffe, R.A.F., is progressing steadily through his exams., and shortly expects to be moved for further training.

L.A.C. F. H. Bromley, R.A.F., a stage further in his training, is at present enjoying the hospitality of Canada.

Recent news of Mr. A. P. Thompson, A.P.O., states that he is fit and well and enjoying his life in the Royal Navy at a shore base.

On Wednesday, December 30th, Mr. G. W. Head, A.P.O., left this port to take up duty at Greenock for the duration. We all wish him every success and a happy time there, and hope that it won't be long before he is back amongst us.

Recently we had a visit from Lieut. D. Dart. He was looking fit and well, and certainly seems to be enjoying his army career.

This Xmastide we had letters from L.A.C. F. H. Bromley and "Jacob" Thompson. The former seems to be enjoying to the full Canadian hospitality, and his letter was couched in the cheeriest of terms. The letter from "Jacob" was very bright, and he certainly seems to be making the best of his misfortune.

We also had greetings cards from Mr. Outram, P.O., and Messrs. Walton, Thompson (Andy) and Raymer, A.P.O.s To all we extend our thanks and best wishes.

N.S.M.

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