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PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

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6, BROOK LANE, BEXLEY, KENT.

Telephone: BEXLEY HEATH 3613.

President:

W. E. STANDRING.

Organising Secretary:

A. E. FARMER.

General Secretary:

W. H. POWELL.

Assistant Secretary:

H. L. BOALCH.

Publicity Officer:

C. F. SHAW, 5, Nyland Road, Huyton, Nr. Liverpool.

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

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

Manchester News

This mainly concerns changes in the staff, and in this respect there have been several comings and goings.

Mr. Walker, P.O., has been transferred to Liverpool, where we hope that his health will continue to pick up.

Mr. L. Battersby has returned to Southampton and left our new friend, Mr. H. G. Stephens, holding the fort in Partington.

Mr. T. B. Coffey, A.P.O., who came to us from Sunderland a few weeks ago, has returned to that port. A short stay and a merry one, Tom?

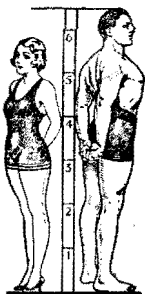
We expect you are telling the Sunderland staff (both of 'em) what wonderful fellows we are.

To conclude, Mr. D. Venning, A.P.O., has joined us from Rothersey. He has a technique all his own, and it isn't solitaire on the fire watch.

In the matter of seizures, it has been quality, not quantity. Two or three cases have been presented and won in court by Mr. W. G. Burgess, C.P.O., who, incidentally, takes a weekly class in regulations.

I shall let the uproar die down before reporting on the progress made. He has certainly got the lads on the run. As our bright friend Hollingsworth, A.P.O., remarks: "After all, I'm only five hundred places off the next exam!"

J. L. M.

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CHANGES IN THE STAFF

TO 15TH NOVEMBER, 1943.

TRANSFER.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Oliver, E. J., Southampton, to Newport.

OFFICERS LEAVING THE SERVICE.

RETIREMENT.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Arnold, H., North Shields, Newcastle.

DEATH.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—

Childs, F. W., Lowestoft, Norwich.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS.

Bent, J. A., Preventive Officer.

Evans, W., Preventive Officer.

Jenkins, B. T., Preventive Officer.

RETIREMENT**H. ARNOLD, P.O., NORTH SHIELDS.**

It is with great regret that I have to announce the premature retirement, owing to ill health, of Mr. H. Arnold, P.O.

Mr. Arnold entered the service in 1914 and after some service in Swansea was transferred to the Tyne. In 1929 he was transferred on promotion to Bo'ness and after a stay of two years, returned to North Shields.

During the last few years he has suffered from ill health and his fortitude and determination to carry on have aroused the admiration and respect of all his colleagues.

Now that he is released from his official duties we hope that these same qualities will carry him forward to happier times.

J. S.

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CURRENT COMMENTS

Waterguard Federation.

UNDOUBTEDLY the most heartening news on the home front is that the Waterguard Superintendents' and Surveyors' Association and the Preventive Staff Association have agreed to federate for the purpose of negotiating the reconstruction of the Waterguard Branch.

This unity of purpose is to be served by unity of action. A grand thought and, when one remembers the years and years of frustrated effort, a very inspiring one.

Several meetings of the representatives have already been held and although it is too early to expect a report of progress we are in a position to say that complete agreement has been reached on each item so far tackled.

Executive Committee (P.S.A.).

The November meeting of the Executive Committee will be held at the Offices of the C. and E. Federation, Walter House, London, on the 30th of the month, commencing at 10 a.m.

Coupons for Uniform.

The draft amendments to G.O.50/41 are under discussion and, as far as we can judge, the new conditions of surrender of coupons will be acceptable by us.

The yearly surrender of eight coupons will be made in February (midway in the coupon year) and to facilitate collection officers will be permitted to use any coupons on pages III or IV of the 1943/4 Ration Book, even though they are not valid for purchases in the shops.

The Association is in correspondence with the Board of Trade and it is hoped that opportunity will be afforded us to discuss the coupon question in so far as our grades are affected.

"Pay-as-you-earn" Income Tax.

In many quarters Civil Servants are having second thoughts on the inclusion of the Civil Service in the Chancellor's Scheme which, it is anticipated, will embrace all Schedule E taxpayers—weekly-wage and salary groups—without limit.

On the one hand it is argued that the present system is of considerable financial benefit to Civil Servants who are mainly on incremental scales. Further that, as the efficient working of "pay-as-you-earn" must largely depend on a measure of stability of earnings, the Treasury would in future more strenuously oppose all changes in emoluments—war bonus adjustments, salary claims, etc.

On the other hand the supporters draw attention to the fact that overtime earnings are likely to be reduced when the war comes to an end and that it would constitute a real hardship to have to pay tax on the higher earnings from a reduced income.

The National Staff Side is, however, proceeding with the matter but have bracketed with it a claim for remission of tax commensurate with that allowed to outside taxpayers.

Christmas Overtime.

Steps are being taken to adjust the overtime periods of December and January to enable the payment of overtime to be made prior to Christmas. The December period will end on the 18th instead of the 25th, and the January period will be extended to five weeks.

Chairman of the Staff Side.

Mr. F. G. Perkins retires from the Service in December next and his last appearance as Vice-Chairman of the Departmental Council will be at the November meeting.

Mr. Perkins will have completed nearly twenty years continuous service with the Departmental Council Staff Side. He made his first appearance at the Council meeting held in May, 1924 (at that particular meeting our General Secretary made his debut).

The task of electing Mr. Perkins's successor in the posts of Chairman of the Joint Committee (C. and E. Associations), and Vice-Chairman of the Departmental Council will be dealt with on December 7th.

BALANCE OF CIVIL PAY.

E.O.C.673 brings to the notice of Departments that in calculating the amount of balance of Civil pay due to Civil Servants in the Forces the pensionable value of uniforms should be included. Instructions are given to make the necessary adjustments, including where appropriate, retrospective payment.

Members in the Forces please note.

Dick Gifford.

We are informed that Mr. Dick Gifford has resigned his position as full-time General Secretary of the Government Minor and Manipulative Grades Association and that the executive control of the Association has been taken over for the time being by a sub-Committee of four members of the National Executive Committee.

Mr. A. G. ("Albert George") May.

Mr. A. G. May, Office Surveyor of London Port, is retiring on the 31st December, 1943.

Mr. May's activities in connection with the C. and E. Orphanage and the Customs Fund, together with his steadfast sympathetic interest in all matters concerning the Waterguard Staff has won for him a host of admirers in all parts.

A presentation is being arranged but lists are not being generally circulated. Will those who wish to be associated with this parting gesture please communicate with the Hon. Secretary, Mr. F. Parslow, Office Surveyor's Office, Third Floor, Adelaide House, London, E.C.4.

BELFAST RETIREMENT

MR. DAVID WILSON, M.B.E., WATERGUARD SURVEYOR.

The very crowd that attended the presentation to Mr. David Wilson, M.B.E., in the Custom House, Belfast, representing, as it did, every Waterguard district in the North of Ireland, members of the Excise and departmental grades, the Coast Preventive men, Watchers and Land Preventive men, was a tribute itself to the sterling qualities of one who had established an affection and regard that are given to very few.

Mr. J. Moore, Collector, presided, and in his opening remarks welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Wilson to the appreciation of a gathering that from its very nature was almost unique, and expressed his pleasure in presiding at such a function. Letters were then read from Mr. Lett, O.B.E., late Collector, Belfast; Mr. J. Kerr, Deputy Inspector General (on behalf of the London Headquarters Staff); Mr. C. R. Purser, Waterguard Superintendent, and from many other officials, in which the writers spoke of the regard with which Mr. Wilson had always been held and of the remarkable popularity and esteem he had enjoyed at every phase of his official career. Mr. G. R. Parish, the new Waterguard Surveyor, spoke of his happy association with his predecessor and of the years which had enabled him to form a lasting judgment of Mr. Wilson's qualities. Mr. McKinna, P.O., spoke next, and his words voicing, as they did, the sentiments of the basic grades, were an indication of the relationship that had existed between them and their former supervisor. Mr. Rankin, King's Warehouse, spoke on behalf of the Officer Grade, and alluded to the breezy personality, the indefatigable official that one had come to recognise. Mr. W. Kearney, Surveyor, spoke on behalf of his grade, and of the significant part Mr. Wilson had always played in the administration of his Department. Many other speakers followed, noteworthy being Mr. W. Taylor, A.P.O., Mr. McKenesling, D.C.O., Mr. Howe, C.P.M., and Mr. Ritchie, Watcher, and all testified to the dual personality of Mr. Wilson, the courteous, accomplished official and the kindly, human personality, with at no time the human qualities lost in the authority. Approachable at all times, he was confident to those who served under him.

Mr. Ards, P.O., then made the presentation of a clock to Mr. Wilson and a suitable gift to Mrs. Wilson. In a happy little speech he spoke of the signal honour he felt on that occasion in proffering a small token of the appreciation in which Mr. Wilson had been held. In handing over those testimonials of the various bodies whose representatives were present, he re-echoed the wish that the happy partnership of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson would be continued for many long years in a well-earned leisure.

Speaking under some emotion, Mr. Wilson thanked all present for their kindness to his very unworthy self, and especially for their very happy association of Mrs. Wilson with the presentation. He was touched by the presence of so many of his colleagues—men of the department of which it had been his pride and privilege to be a member.

The proceedings concluded and all paid their respects individually to a figure whose loss will be felt for many years.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Liverpool Branch of the Preventive Staff Association was held at the Landing Stage on Wednesday, October 27th, 1943. Following the reading of the minutes, which were duly adopted, the first item was the election of Officials for 1943-44. The elections resulted as follows:—

Chairman: Mr. L. W. Hyland, P.O.
 Vice-Chairman: Mr. F. Hope, A.P.O.
 District Secretary: Mr. R. Davies, P.O.
 Assistant District Secretary: Mr. B. L. Dodd, A.P.O.
 District Organiser: Mr. R. J. Davidson, A.P.O.
 Whitley Representatives: Mr. R. Davies, P.O., and Mr. C. F. Shaw, A.P.O.,

who also serve on the Local Joint Whitley Committee, together with:—

Messrs. C. P. Titherley, C.P.O.; L. J. Hall, P.O.; W. C. Hughes, A.P.O.; R. M. Henderson, A.P.O.
 Auditors: Mr. W. S. Kemp, P.O., and Mr. R. G. Roberts, A.P.O.
 Journal Correspondent: Mr. W. C. Hughes, A.P.O.

The elections resulted in some changes from last year's Executive, due in part to resignations caused by transfer and promotion. We are happy to welcome as District Secretary Mr. R. Davies, P.O., and we are hopeful that he will enhance his already high reputation gained in other districts. With Mr. B. L. Dodd, A.P.O., as his Assistant, and Mr. C. F. Shaw, A.P.O., as his Whitley colleague, he is assured of the best type of support.

Following the elections, the first item on the agenda was Correspondence, and under this heading a letter was read from the Fleetwood Staff, asking for advice in formulating a claim for Rubber Boots and protective leggings, as already supplied to Immigration, Intelligence Control and Censorship Officials for use on the fish quays. The justice of their claim was agreed by several speakers of all grades who have served in Fleetwood, and the appropriate course of action was indicated. It was agreed that the District Secretary should communicate the suggestions to Fleetwood and report developments at a later meeting.

This item was followed by the various reports. Mr. L. W. Hyland, as Acting District Secretary, gave a review of the year's work and achievements, and drew attention to the sterling work of Mr. P. A. North as District Secretary prior to his return to London. The meeting expressed approval and the report was duly adopted, together with a resolution that a letter be sent to Mr. P. A. North, expressing the thanks and sincere appreciation of the Liverpool District Membership.

Mr. C. M. Porter, the retiring District Organiser, gave a review of the financial position, which showed a most satisfactory state of affairs. The statement was agreed, coupled with a resolution congratulating Mr. Porter on the success of his efforts and expressing the thanks of the Membership for his past services.

Next came a comprehensive review of the Conference Report by Mr. C. F. Shaw, who enlarged on many points and gave answers and explanations to the several questions raised. Lively interest was displayed in the items dealing with the Journal, Uniform, Re-organisation and Staffing of Aerodromes, and it is certain that Mr. Shaw will take to the next Executive Committee Meeting many helpful and constructive suggestions.

Following the adoption of the Conference Report, the meeting proceeded to discussion on the many items of local interest, the first of which concerned Staffing.

The report of the Sub-Committee on this subject called for permanent staff at Bromborough Dock, Speke Airport and the Naval Station. The meeting accepted the suggestions put forward as forming the basis of policy. The difficulty of obtaining extra staffing for the port was stressed by several speakers, and the meeting proceeded to discuss ways and means of coping with this and other staffing problems.

The opinion was widely expressed that the department locally, already short staffed and saddled with a multiplicity

of extra war-time duties, was of late being further unfairly burdened under Liverpool War Orders by the transfer of many duties appropriate to the Landing Staff. Numerous instances were given, and much sharp criticism was expressed, culminating in a resolution:—

"That this meeting of the Liverpool Branch of the Preventive Staff Association wishes to protest to the Waterguard Superintendent regarding the transfer to the Waterguard Department under Liverpool War Orders of duties appropriate to the Landing Staff."

It was further agreed that the Staff representatives should seek to have certain orders transferring these duties rescinded.

Arising out of the foregoing discussion, Mr. C. P. Titherley put forward a resolution from a C.P.O.'s grade meeting:—

"That this branch is of the opinion that no smuggling proceedings should be taken by Waterguard Officers in respect of cases involving goods proven to be cargo, either inwards or outwards."

This resolution, like the preceding one, was carried unanimously.

Still on staffing, points were raised by Mr. E. J. Pollock and Mr. W. S. Kemp, who both complained of lack of adequate arrangements for assistance when Officers on stations were overburdened with work.

Mr. Pollock instanced lack of arrangements to cope with convoy arrivals after 4 p.m., due partly to inadequate advance information regarding arrivals and partly to failure by C.P.O.s to provide sufficient staff by retaining day staff on overtime to deal with evening arrivals when these were known in advance. He proposed that these complaints should be made known to the Official Side, coupled with a resolution:—

"That proper advance information regarding convoy arrivals should be obtained from the Naval Authorities and transmitted to stations with a view to extra staff being retained on duty, where it is expected that work will be heavy."

Mr. Kemp instanced difficulty in obtaining assistance on day duty, such as when fresh arrivals coincided with heavy shipments of stores. He stated that the Staff were too frequently enjoined to "do the best you can," and he proposed a resolution:—

"That in order to have more P.O.'s available for duties applicable purely to that grade, all P.O.'s at present employed on patrol and clerical duties in C.P.O.'s offices should be replaced forthwith by A.P.O.'s."

Before this resolution was put, some speakers suggested that perhaps the position would be met if A.P.O.'s were authorised by the Waterguard Superintendent to perform certain duties appropriate to the P.O. Grade along the lines of an order issued by the Waterguard Surveyor in respect of Ellesmere Port. This suggestion met with strong criticism all round, in which many speakers drew attention to the fact that whilst from nearly every quarter there came complaints of shortage in the P.O. Grade, apparently the powers that be were not taking the steps necessary to remedy the deficiency, namely, the promotion of the many officers at present on the waiting list.

Mr. Kemp's resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

A further resolution:—

"That this meeting of the Liverpool Branch of the P.S.A. strongly deprecates the circumstances revealed as existing at Ellesmere Port, where shortage of P.O.'s has caused the Waterguard Surveyor to issue an order whereby A.P.O.'s are at times required to perform duties appropriate to the P.O. Grade. The meeting requests the early appointment of adequate P.O. Staff for this port and the cancellation of the order in question."

was also carried unanimously.

This concluded the item Staffing, and on the next, Tontine Scheme, Mr. L. W. Hyland gave the meeting facts and figures from which it became apparent that the scheme would have to be abandoned for lack of support.

Other Business brought forth two written resolutions. One was by Mr. J. W. Dinsdale, who drew attention to difficulties experienced at times by Officers, even with Commission, in establishing their identity to the satisfaction of Armed Guards. He proposed:—

"That the official Side be approached with a view to their furnishing Members of the Liverpool Staff with Identity Form D.R.1, as issued to the London Staff, or failing this a similar form."

This resolution was unanimously agreed.

Another resolution, by the River Officers sought Waterguard support for a proposal that the protective concrete slabs on the roof of the wheelhouse and forward chart room of the launches be removed to improve stability and prevent leakage caused by rotting. This was agreed.

Mr. L. E. Hellen raised the question of Officers in outports being allowed leave covering Christmas and New Year. He pointed out several anomalies and accommodation difficulties which could arise and had occurred in past war-time years. He proposed a resolution, which was carried unanimously:—

"That this Branch is of the opinion that no leave, other than compassionate leave, involving relief from a base port, should be granted over Christmas and New Year."

This concluded one of the longest meetings ever held in Liverpool. The attendance was most encouraging, comprising as it did representatives of all grades as well as some Members from outports. A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the proceedings.

MANCHESTER MEETING

The Manchester Branch of the Association held a meeting on the 13th October and the A.P.O.s room was well filled.

Mr. Westerdale, P.O., occupied the chair and gave a welcome to Mr. H. G. Stephens, A.P.O., who had come up from Partington.

The usual local business was transacted in a brisk manner and then we got down to items of a more Association interest, such as seizure rewards. In this case the meeting, after deep discussion, resolved "that the payment of automatic seizure rewards to Preventive Officers be abolished."

This item was taken further by a resolution that rewards should be similarly dealt with in the case of Assistant Preventive Officers.

We next heard a condensed report on the P.S.A. conference and the Executive Committee meeting.

This was delivered by Mr. W. G. Burgess, C.P.O., in the bright and breezy manner which we have learned to associate with our new C.P.O.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, who, in turn, thanked Mr. Burgess for his informative report.

J. L. M.

MISCELLANEOUS.

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HULL PRESENTATION

On Friday, 20th October, at the Imperial Hotel, Hull, a Smoking Concert was held to say farewell to Mr. P. W. Howard, C.P.O., on the occasion of his retirement from the Service.

Despite black-out conditions and restricted travelling, colleagues and friends turned up in force. The Long Room, Shipping Interests, Ship Chandlers, Immigration Department, Health Authorities and the Ministry of War Transport were all represented.

The Chairman was Mr. T. H. Jones, Waterguard Superintendent, Hull, who opened the proceedings with a summary of Mr. Howard's career recounted in a sparkling style, which put the company in good humour and sealed the success of the evening. Amongst many other interesting points, Mr. Jones, in his speech, referred to Mr. Howard's service in the Royal Marines during the last war, particularly on board H.M.S. "Valiant" at Jutland, and also to his being one of the officers in the Service to be distinguished by the award of the Coronation Medal.

Next Mr. A. Cameron, Waterguard Superintendent, spoke highly of Mr. Howard's qualities, both as a colleague and friend over a very long period, and made the presentation of a fitted travelling case and a cheque to Mr. Howard and a handbag to Mrs. Howard.

The chairman then read out letters from well wishers unable to be present in person.

Mr. Woodford, I.G.W., wrote to congratulate Mr. Howard on his sterling service and to wish both him and Mrs. Howard a long and happy retirement.

Mr. Howard, Collector, Hull, who apologised for his unavoidable absence, sent his congratulations and good wishes.

Other letters were received from Mr. W. E. Kay, Inspector; Mr. R. O. Kewley, Assistant Inspector; Mr. A. H. Stevens, C.P.O., Tyne; Mr. E. B. Jeaner, C.P.O., Leith; Mr. H. Collier, P.O., Goole; Mr. G. T. Clarke, A.P.O., Plymouth; Mr. W. H. Powell, General Secretary P.S.A.; Dr. Gebbie, Port M.O.H.; W. Cockerline & Co., Ltd.; Ellerman's Wilson Line; Hull Ship's Stores; and Atkinson & Prickett, Ltd.

These letters detailed the various aspects of Mr. Howard's character and helped to explain his very obvious popularity with all sections of people with whom his service had brought him into contact.

The speeches which followed the reading of the letters brought out those characteristics which combined to make him such a fine fighter and yet such a suave diplomat, qualities which he used to the full for the benefit of the P.S.A. All letters and speeches alluded to the big part which, throughout his career, Mr. Howard had played in Association matters, and many pointed out the debt which the Service as a whole owes him as one of the Association Pioneers.

When called upon to reply, Mr. Howard was obviously overwhelmed at the reception and at the unmitigated praises accorded him. He made brief but heartfelt thanks to one and all on behalf of himself and his wife for the splendid send off. His last words were on behalf of his beloved Association. He said that he had attempted to gain 100% membership for the Port of Hull before he retired. Saying that he had not been quite successful, he appealed for the last time for all those who had previously withheld membership to bolster up Association policy.

Thus his last effort was toward that unity of purpose which had characterised his attitude to the Association throughout his career.

The company then turned its attention to the pleasant task of smoking, drinking, and to the enjoyment of a first-class entertainment, the artistes being Messrs. Walker, Wilson, Moss and Price, with Mr. Tilley at the piano.

It was indeed an enjoyable evening, the success of which was largely due to the efforts of Mr. F. Nightingale, P.O., Secretary of the Sports Club.

N. S. M.

"CUCKOOS" IN THE NEST

Probably the most remarkable characteristic of that most remarkable malingerer, the Cuckoo, is its complete lack of any sense of racial or social responsibility. Alone of the species ornithological it pays absolutely no regard to the welfare of its young: in effect jeopardising the whole future existence of its fellows.

Other birds slave to perpetuate the species, assiduously building nests of remarkable elaborateness and an astonishing degree of comfort to house their young, and later, labouring unsparingly to feed them, often to the extent of depriving themselves of the necessary sustenance. One recalls that fine statuesque model of the eagle slashing its own breast that its starving young may feed, as typifying this devotion.

Not so the Cuckoo! Apparently this bird is too lazy to build a nest of its own, or perhaps it is incapable of doing so! No tiring journeyings to and fro, building a sanctuary twig by twig, hair by hair, for Mrs. Cuckoo, she just searches around until she finds a comfortable one built by the painstaking labour of some prudent bird, deposits her egg and immediately loses all interest in it. She relies on the labours, the sacrifices, and the providence of others, even to the extent of imposing the hatching of her young upon another bird. The responsibility of feeding and caring for her offspring, she leaves to a stranger, in fact to anyone so long as it reduces any effort called for on her part.

When hatched, however, the lusty young cuckoo, almost invariably larger than the species in whose nest it has been laid, ably maintains the reputation of its parent for selfishness. . . . It has an insatiable appetite, and in its greed devours its own share of the feed and, if possible, that of the legitimate occupants of the nest. The saying: "What's yours is mine, and what's mine's my own," just about puts in a nutshell the Cuckoo's idea of "Lebensraum."

So that from the time it is hatched, the cuckoo is a burden on the bird community, content always to leave the hard work to others, the older generation unwilling to shelter or make any provision for its succeeding generation; but always at hand when the work is finished, sharing shamelessly in the comforts and amenities it has made no effort to realise.

Surely one could be forgiven for dismissing such a superb example of sheer indifference to one's own kind as unique in all the world. But, in actual fact, isn't the strong analogy between the non-member of the P.S.A. and the improvident cuckoo startlingly obvious? Both inclined to be over-vociferous; both satisfied that others should bear "the burden and heat of the day"; alike burdens on their respective communities. The non-member, like the cuckoo, always eager to reap where others have sown, and never sparing a thought for those who must follow.

Indeed, couldn't the designation "Cuckoo" be applied with singular appropriateness to the non-member? His warped mentality, his floundering in the realms of reasoning to justify the fact that his poor brain cannot grasp that, to a large degree, "unity" and "strength" are synonymous. His "Quisling" action in causing doubts amongst members, by attributing the lowest motives to the high ideals which actuate those who are prepared to take an active part in the fight for the common good. Surely this wretched man's state is summed up by the word "Cuckoo" . . . in fact he IS cuckoo!

Cuckoo, then, by nature, "Cuckoo" he should be by name, or as the poet exclaims:—

"No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery."

— JOHN PEEL.

LONDON PRESENTATION

Mr. A. T. Dodd, C.B.E., Collector, London Port, is retiring on the 31st December, 1943. A presentation is being arranged, but lists are not being generally circulated outside the Port. Will those wishing to be associated with the presentation kindly communicate with the Hon. Secretary, P. W. Powell, Correspondence Room, Customs and Excise, Adelaide House, King William Street, London, E.C.4.

Merseyside News

Apart from the Annual General Meeting reported elsewhere, there are several items of Forces news this month.

Ralph Colling was home recently—he has been promoted and is now a full Lieutenant R.N.V.R. He looked fit and well, and told a strange story of a rather embarrassing incident which occurred when he visited the local with his wife and friends. He called for drinks, tendering a pound note, and instead of receiving his change as expected, he was asked to step aside for a few enquiries. It appears that the note bore a serial number which indicated that it had recently been part of the proceeds of a robbery in the Midlands. Fortunately the matter was cleared up fairly quickly; but what a nasty experience.

Another Ralph, Telegraphist R. A. S. Hill, R.N., also called in the other day. He has seen plenty of excitement, both in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean. He said that it seemed novel to be escorting vessels he knew as "good ships for a rummage."

From Ralph as the Christian name to the Surname, Sergt. Pilot Bert Ralph, is still busy with Coastal Command and enjoying his job. He likes the present "ship" even better than his old Morris Eight of famous memory.

Back to the Navy again to report that our old friend, Sub. Lieutenant Jack Abbott, R.N.V.R. (Runcorn, late Liverpool), was second in command of the first British landing craft to enter Brindisi. The vessel had also previously played a notable part in the Sicilian invasion.

Another Naval Officer, returning home after a spell of service overseas, was Sub. Lieut. P. Blackburn, R.N.V.R. (West Hartlepool). He passed through recently and should have seen several friends by now.

Harry Worthington, now a Sergt. Major, is still in India; where he is hoping soon to have an opportunity for a crack at the Japs. He writes in appreciation of the Journal and says he is particularly interested in the reports therein of P.S.A. activities.

Charlie Webster was in Liverpool recently. He appears to have fully recovered from wounds sustained in North Africa. He is still stationed in the Scottish Isles, and says that he was hoping to be transferred to the Intelligence Control—what, another?

Norman Billington, our one-time centre forward (remember him, Southampton?), who left us just before the war to join the D.C.O. grade, writes from North Africa, where he has seen much active service as a Signaller in the Royal Corps. He would like to be back in this country and back in the good old Waterguard—happy days. As a well-known Holy-head character would say: "Do you blame him?"

Seizures are frequently in the limelight and several crews have been keeping the police courts busy. One effort, which made the headlines in the local press, concerned the hairdresser on a large troop vessel who attempted to evade the duty on 121 high-class watches. He was prosecuted on behalf of the department by Mr. A. S. Annis, C.P.O., and, being convicted, was fined £600.

The watches were found in many small parcels by Mr. F. M. Stanford, A.P.O., of the Stage Rummage Crew, under the supervision of Mr. T. R. Snellgrove, P.O.

Finally comes news that after lengthy negotiation the Staffing of Speke Airport has at last been laid to this department. Congratulations are due to all, on both sides of the table, who worked to achieve this favourable result.

That's the news, chaps. Let's hear from you.

BILL HUGHES.

Waterguard Spotlight.

ONE DAY HE MAY SEARCH HIS OWN QUARTERS!

The D.O., Hull, informs us: Mr. AUTY, A.P.O., who asked for release to the M.N. from the Preventive Service is now, at 28, Master of a "Fort" boat. He has been 3rd Mate on a Wilson Line vessel, on tankers and before entering our service, an Apprentice. London officers will remember him. He transferred to Hull in 1939.

Agitation, Stagnation and Education

The agitation is quite polite, almost genteel. We don't strike and we wouldn't if we could. We don't soap-box or chalk slogans; we don't shout or threaten; the official side does not bully, and altogether relationship between us and them is almost excessively polite. Yet it is agitation, and that is what, principally, the Association exists for: to stir things up, to try persistently to improve the job itself and those who do the job, high and low. We believe that this cannot be done until pay and conditions are as good as those given to comparable civil servants and until general Civil Service standards do not lag behind those in comparable work outside. That is our function and we are doing it for you by our civil, but so often quite effective, form of agitation all the time—whether you pay subs. or not, and whether or not you show any interest in what we are doing for you.

The Association has another purpose: Education. In the V.E.S. which we will soon have with us again, better than before, we show well the dual object of the Association. This educational work is for the benefit of the job. We instruct, without cost to the Crown, the Crown's servants; we interpret for those servants often difficult regulations. At the same time we are providing for our members access to a higher post and so improving their standing in the service, if not always with any immediate financial improvement.

But the V.E.S. does not only exist to get people through examinations. No one likes doing a job in a "come day, go day spirit." Chesterton was right to say that if a job is worth doing it's worth doing badly, but the old proverb advocating that it should be done well if possible should rule our actions. Perhaps the worst aspect of the stagnation in the A.P.O. grade (which must be ended) is that there is a risk of progressive lack of interest in the job beyond its routine aspects, and the Crown loses by this considerably. It is not to the country's interest that keen young men, well fitted for higher tasks, should become blasé middle-aged men still performing minor duties. It is uneconomic. The Crown could get more for its money than that. (It often does, we know, but this extra work goes on unrecognised, and the system itself does not tend towards an inclination to give a little more.) What other trade or profession would have so prolonged an apprenticeship? When I think of A.P.O.'s of fourteen years' service still, as far as recognition goes, of little more value to the Crown than a probationer, and much less value than those boys we released to the armed Services, I have to remind myself that there are others in the job with a grievance: detached officers, officers in other grades "stagnant," the "failed" officers, junior A.P.O.'s on a lower rate of overtime. But there is a hierarchy of sympathy. In our excellent contemporary, the "Eireann Customs Journal," among the condolences I saw, some time ago, one for Paddy O'Hara's uncle. Now I felt sorry to hear that Paddy's uncle was dead, but I could not cry for very long.

The A.P.O.'s job is, of course, quite important, apart from being a path to P.O.ship. But it is not enough. It is a waste of manpower. It is P.O.s the job is short of and to hold up promotion of the kind of young man the Crown has been able to recruit since 1928 because of a fortuitous shortage of A.P.O.s, as if there were some law that there must always be a fixed proportion of the numbers in one grade to those in another, is unfair to the men and wasteful on the part of the Crown.

Meanwhile, if it only prevents these young (or youngish) men from becoming disgruntled and lax the V.E.S. will have done its duty. It must also, of course, be ready to instruct the returning Servicemen, who will need brushing up, and I should like the so-called "failed" officers to take a course too; the job is worth giving thought to, whatever your rank.

The V.E.S. will naturally have a part to play when the Board decides that entrants should be properly trained. This matter will be dealt with at greater length in a later article.

But is that all the educational work that the Association can do? No. We need a paralld activity to our job of educating

the member in his duties to his Association and the Board in our value in any post-war "controls" system. That should be, as soon as the time is ripe, an excursion into the realm of higher vocational education; when, incidentally the value of the Headquarter's Library (see article by NOD in our next issue) will quickly appear. Except perhaps Mr. Burgess, now putting the finishing touches to the new V.E.S. structure, no one seems more fitted to this task, to my mind, than the P.O. Councillor for South Wales. Hear him, the learned but unassuming H.E.P.B. on this subject:—

"In my opinion membership will only remain high when it is realised that the Association has something very definite to offer in the future. . . . I am convinced that we shall never get anywhere until we enter the fields of higher educational vocational study!"

H.E.P.B. not only advocates (after a few casual remarks about spirit assaying and alcoholometry which leave me open-mouthed) higher education for the Preventive Service but, bearing in mind the feats of Sikes and Drinkwater, Scarisbrick and McNaught, he is at present working on a series of subjects, I hope he won't mind my mentioning, which would result in the provision of text-books for the very purpose. And, faith, the P.S.A. will print 'em, some day, with a P.S.A. Annual and all the rest of it. (Members one day will pay a small regular subscription and have a constant flow of works of Customs interest, grave and gay). He is already half way through a Preventive Service Dictionary (the real McCoy) and projects a series on specific goods, Wine, Spirits, Tobacco (and here's me not knowing the duty on Havana cigars!) and a work on Court Proceedings, with examples, and with that members no doubt could give him much help. Send court case cuttings (and any other cuttings even remotely concerning us, e.g., new airdrome developments) and I'll pass them on. He further discusses—but that is off the subject—the need of a series in the Journal on the work of local Association Officers and the proper conduct of meetings. That will come. What amazing industry! Such study for your benefit by one of the Councillors is, in itself, worth your tanner a week.

I have only touched the fringe of those plans of H.E.P.B.'s with which I hope to collaborate. They have the potentialities, generally, of education from probationship to retirement in our service. Another kind of apathy is thereby being attacked and we call confidently on all good men in the job (no "cuckoos" need apply) to help the attack. We are not only working for fair treatment, reasonable pay and status, decent accommodation and conditions for everyone in the job, but are striving to make the job 100 per cent. better than it is now and to have the men ready to fit into the improved service of the future. Too big an undertaking for our little body? Not at all. Morale is to numbers as ten is to one and morale is only energy and directed will. We have plenty of these in the job. Will you put in your portion?

C. F. S.

CUMBERLAND DISTRICT MEETING

Silloth, Maryport, Whitehaven and Workington were represented in force at the Quarterly Meeting at Workington, on the 30th of October, to honour a conscientious area councillor, Mr. C. F. Shaw. Mr. Shaw had travelled the hundred odd miles from Liverpool, mainly to give an account of his Stewardship, and he was deservedly awarded a unanimous vote of confidence at the close of the meeting.

Amongst the resolutions passed and forwarded to Liverpool was one which recorded whole-hearted approval of the policy of the P.S.A. in seeking the abolition of Seizure Awards to the P.O. Grade, and pressure for similar action with regard to the A.P.O. Grade as, and when, convenient.

A continuation meeting was held at Maryport on the 3rd of November, when the main item was Re-organisation, the question of Affiliation to the T.U.C. was regarded as premature, while Section 5 remains statutory.

Hull colleagues will be interested to have news of one of their A.P.O.s, originally on detached duty at Workington, he is now Sub-Lieutenant G. Budge, R.N.V.R.

"JOHN PEEL."

Greenock News

Forces News.

Following my remarks about lack of correspondence from forces colleagues I have been reminded that I have on occasion been told of letters received from Jimmy Reay who, after spending several months in Liverpool on a special course, is now fully qualified and serving aboard a corvette. Never having received any correspondence direct I am afraid I forgot. However, better late than never, and I still look forward to hearing from all the others.

Having bid him farewell a year ago, I was very pleased to welcome home F/O Bromley. Apparently he has been so successful as a flying instructor that he despaired of ever getting back, but at last he is transferred from "hops" to "ops." He wrote to me nearly a year ago, but so far the letter has not arrived; likewise he never received a copy of the Journal: may be they swim the mail across these days!

The Silly Season.

Perchance a misconstruction of the appeal to harvesters is responsible for the extra fine copy of idiotic rumours. The silliest of these "Lock Ness Monstrosities" was that the A.P.O. grade was to be augmented by girls! This was greeted with much mock enthusiasm, and provided a topic of ribald discussion for several days before it died a natural and timely death.

Concrete Facts for an Abstract Body.

We heard that a very august body was about to inspect the work of the Waterguard; even that we were to have the opportunity of speaking freely to this ethereal conclave; and there were several who looked forward eagerly to the chance of voicing constructive suggestions. We know of a man whose friend's cousin heard of someone who says he actually saw such a phantom host being wafted round a large but nameless ship.

We do not know whether there is a suggestion to deplete the Waterguard staff or to augment it with "temporaries"; or indeed if there be any suggestions at all. We do know though, by long experience, essentials which the keenest observers could not be expected to grasp in a day or a week.

Let us assume the fantastic: that an outsider with the power and desire to modify our methods were to put himself freely in our hands for instruction. First we would impress on him that the Waterguard is nothing like any job he has ever seen either within or without the Civil Service, and that he must therefore disabuse himself of all preconceptions he may have gathered in his experience of running other jobs or departments: that in spite of the regulations remaining almost unchanged the job was again entirely different from what it used to be in peace-time; that if he were to become an A.P.O. to-day he would in five years time still be regarded as only a "boy" in the job because any day's work he might witness would be typical of that day only, and the next day would probably be quite different. If he were permitted to see a number of officers sitting around with nothing to do but amend their codes he must not assume that we were overstaffed for, though to-day the station was but a bare expanse of water, to-morrow might see it harbouring two or three hundred ships.

We would let him see that, if only one large transport arrived, five times the staff would not be too many to perform the work strictly according to regulations. He would also see the day when there were a dozen transports, a score of other foreign arrivals, several warships paying off, several hundred outward passengers, and an airplane or two for makeweight. And all this, mark you, not in the snug confines of a dock but spread over many miles of open water exposed to the full force of the southwest gale which always seems to blow on these occasions. He would see that by stretching the staff to its utmost, and by dint of several hours' steaming to and fro, it was possible to place two or three officers aboard most of the more important ships—apparently in the hope that the majesty of their presence, aided by a few words of warning spoken to the passengers through the broadcasting system would in some measure serve to protect the revenue and even encourage the more scrupulous to fight their way through the milling crowds in order to pay some of the duty on their goods to the P.O.

On a less hectic day our imaginary observer might visit a troop deck—once the ship's hold—crammed with the hundreds of sweating bodies of long-cooped-up passengers, both combatant and civilian: in the half light are three or four A.P.O.s taking declarations and sending every man to two or three

P.O.s to pay duty. In three minutes about fifty declarations are taken and the queue is judged to have reached saturation point. While the men declare their goods a second time and pay duty the A.P.O.s occupy the long wait before they can fill up the queue by examining the baggage of those who have paid. They are guided, however, by the fact that any query, **they being debarred from dealing with it themselves**, must necessarily bring a P.O. from the duty table; three such queries bring the job in hand to a standstill; thirty would be unmanageable. They are aware that there are four thousand passengers to be cleared in a few hours, or less, by perhaps six P.O.s—tenders and trains are waiting—and that, under these conditions, the best way to protect the revenue is to provide to as many as possible of those who are willing the opportunity to come forward and pay their duty.

On another troop deck a different and somewhat quicker method may be in progress; the men having been requested to form a queue, the A.P.O. sits at its head, skilfully and rapidly extracts the salient facts from each man's rambling declaration, and dictates the items for duty to the P.O. at his side, who copies them in his duty slip book while the A.P.O., who has already calculated the amount of duty, collects the money and gives the change. Our astounded observer may well enquire why, if one must have two men do the job he has just seen one doing, the junior officer does not do the writing while the senior performs what appears to be the more responsible job of extracting declarations and collecting money! We point out to him, of course, that, whatever it may appear, the man who does the writing is bound to be the one who is ultimately responsible for correctly assessing the duty and for delivering the cash. Moreover, the only A.P.O.s left are senior men who could well do the job themselves; otherwise the P.O.s. would not trust them with such a task.

"But surely" says our bewildered observer "if, as I have seen for myself, these men are as capable as you say, why not give them duty slip books? After all, are they not P.O.s. even though Assistants?" "There, sir" we would reply "you are deceived by an ambiguity of title: an A.P.O. is not a P.O. who assists, but an officer who assists a P.O.—a very different thing. It is made perfectly clear in his instructions: he has no responsibilities except that of behaving himself; he has no rights except that of search under a P.O.'s direction; he cannot adjudicate on the disposal of so much as one cigarette; he cannot put his name to paper except on an appearance sheet; he has no specific duty save that of doing anything it may please a P.O. to tell him to do, and if he happens to do that badly the responsibility is the P.O.'s, not his. Obviously it is inconceivable that such a grade should be directed to undertake any such responsible task as taking duty; neither do they ask for it. If an officer is required to perform more responsible duties it is only right that he be promoted to the grade to which those duties are proper. Therefore, sir, if you are concerned with the efficient utilisation of man-power, do not deplete the staff of a department which, even from the little you have seen, is already working under absolutely fantastic difficulties; neither engulf us with a swarm of "temporaries" who, for some years, would be not merely useless but a hindrance and a nuisance. Rather utilise to the full such man-power as is already available. For the proper performance of our daily work many more P.O.s are urgently required. There is a highly trained capable body of men, all with many years' experience behind them, whose abilities are strangled and wasted because the right to make full use of their knowledge and ability is denied them. **To every man vouchsafe such authority as he is able to wield. We have the tools: give us promotion and we will finish the job.**"

B. A. BENNING.

Bristol Note

The officers at a South Western Airport had a pleasant surprise the other day, when among the passengers was Leslie M. Twentyman. He has returned after 2½ years' service in the Middle East, where he followed the 8th Army to Benghazi. "Twenty" was looking exceedingly fit but said he was glad to be back home again, and was keenly looking forward to three weeks' leave, which he hopes will be granted to him.

We were glad to see he had come through the long African campaign unscathed, but then he always was a lucky guy.

The Lads o' London

Another Christmas is drawing near and makes us think of greetings, presents and parties, and indeed is the one season of the year when we like to gather together with our families and spend it together.

A special thought is needed this Yuletide for those of our colleagues who are in the Forces, whether at home or overseas, not forgetting the three prisoners of war. Many of them have not spent a Christmas at home since the war started, and must be feeling somewhat "browned-off" at the prospect of yet another away from home. Quite a few of us think that it will be their last in such circumstances, and look forward to great reunions next year.

To all of the London boys serving in the armed forces we then say, have a jolly good time, lads, wherever you are, and the best wishes of the Superintendent and the rest of the London staff are extended to you. The same wishes are offered to those of our number who are away on detached duty. All of us look forward to the day when Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards Men is in fact a reality.

Four more of the lads have returned home after a long spell of D.D.—Messrs. Catchpole, Davis, Dilling and Lynch—and it was quite pleasant to see their faces in the familiar surroundings again. Tom Cole has left for service in a Scottish port.

News of the fighting boys is quite good. Dick Jones has arrived in Port of Spain, Trinidad, and says that the work is quite familiar, and is fortunate in having a Waterguard colleague to work with him in the person of George Warlow, A.P.O., late of Gravesend and Port Talbot. Dick's hardest job, he says, is to keep his hands off the dutiable goods that he sees during his visits to ships.

Arthur Burnham, who, by the way, recently became the father of a bonny baby girl—our congrats., Arthur—is working in the same unit as Jack Berry. Both are sub-lieutenants in the Royal Navy and each had command of their own ship. They are stationed very near to Jack's home town.

Roger Withey, too, has joined the ever-increasing ranks of new parents and has now a son and heir. We also send to him and his wife our congratulations. Now in South Wales, he is in charge of the unit's orderly room, with all the administrative work that is associated with such a place. Promotion has come to him and he is now a corporal.

Another chap in the R.A.F. is Denis Maguire, now a fully-fledged sergeant navigator, and he has been posted to an O.C.T.U. One of his reasons for endeavouring to obtain a commission is the desire to add yet another name to that fast-growing list of the London boys who have been so promoted from the ranks, so that we can have a long line stretching from the "Harpy" to Gravesend.

I am sure that the I.G.W. must be proud of his lads in the forces, and even the Honourable Board must note with pleasure the achievements of their servants in the Waterguard.

After a long period of service spent in Essex, Alec Wheatley is expecting a move, and news of his new sphere of labour is awaited with interest. John Griffin was in the front line of the Sicilian affair and put in some useful work there. He is now basking in the Mediterranean sunshine and, like Mr. Micawber, is waiting for something to turn up and, in addition, is looking forward to the day when he can return to Surrey Dock, and to the prospect of making a fourth when there's nowt to do.

Another lad in Italy is Sergt. John McKenzie. He receives the "C. Js" regularly and is very interested in all the talk concerning reorganisation. Greatly surprised to have read of the drive for P.S.A. members. He added that we must be 100 per cent. within ourselves before we can talk of reorganisation. Nevertheless he wished the drive all success and hoped that it attains its objective.

We are indeed proud to have on the secretariat of the C.T.E. Widows' and Orphans' Fund our old friend George Dover. Such a choice by the members was indeed a wise one, and we know George can be relied upon to give of his best in that direction.

My own wishes for a Happy Christmas to all of you.

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

R. J. L.

The Household Physician

A few of the subjects treated

Gas Warfare
First Aid Lessons
Influenza, Colds, etc.
Sick Nursing from A to Z
Measles, Mumps, Catarrh
Nerve and Brain Diseases
Corns and Warts
Physical Culture
What to Do in Emergencies
Treatment for all Skin Diseases
The Lungs, Pleurisy
Diseases of Women
Hygiene, Anatomy, Pharmacy
The Principles of Nursing
The Eye, the Ear
The Throat, the Nose
The Chest, the Heart
The Stomach, the Liver
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Gravesend News

Gravesend news this time begins on a sad note. Towards the end of September last we were shocked at the sudden death of Alf Hazelgrove, M.C. He was apparently in good health when his wife, taking up his morning cup of tea found him dead in bed. Now comes the startling report of George Taplin, S.M.I, who died in similar circumstances at the latter part of October. Everyone in Gravesend had a great liking for George, who was cheerful under any conditions. I am sure London colleagues who knew him when he worked at Woolwich, will also be just as shocked as us. George was interred at Gravesend on Friday, 29th October, 3.30 p.m., after a service at the Catholic Church.

Perhaps some of our D.D. Officers may not have heard that Bert Woodroffe has been reported missing, believed killed. He was at Gravesend only a couple of months ago, enjoying leave prior to operations.

On a brighter note, we welcome back some of our D.D. officers, Jimmy Cooper, Arthur Aylen and Bill Waylett. Unfortunately, Bill Waylett is at present on sick leave and the Staff wish him a speedy recovery. Anyone wishing to send him a cheery line, please write to:—W. H. Waylett, 3, Belmont Terrace, Lydd, Kent, and no doubt, if he is away the letters will be forwarded to him.

On Friday, the 5th November, officers of all ranks from Gravesend, Chatham and Sheerness met at the "City of London," Gravesend, to bid farewell to George Tubby, Yard-staff, who was retiring after 53 years' service in Government employ.

Mr. A. Richardson, Surveyor, presided and opened by giving George's earlier naval activities. In 1919 George left the navy and went to London. He came to Gravesend in 1925.

Messrs. Jones and Belger wished George a happy retirement.

Mr. E. N. Sharnock, M.B.E., said George was the most reliable fellow he had ever known.

Compliments and pleasant memories of George were paid by Messrs. Swan, Pepperel, Chuck, Milward and Wilson. "Chippy" Pale gave a humorous account of the yard associations with George. P.L.A. officials present spoke of George in glowing terms.

Letters were received from Mr. Mussett, Advising Officer, Erith Station, and Mr. Strong, Landing Officer, and Mr. Creese, C.P.O.

The Superintendent, Mr. C. R. Purser, sent a letter explaining how disappointed he was at being unable to be present.

Mr. H. A. Painter, Watcher, made the presentation, a fine clock and a table lamp for Mrs. Tubby.

George Tubby rose to reply, saying that he didn't think he deserved all the nice things that had been said. He had been through rough and smooth times, but had gained much pleasure through trying to be always cheerful.

"Joss" Jones, carpenter, made a second presentation in the form of a wooden model of the Albatross in glass case. Much amusement was afforded to the assembly at the witty remarks made by Mr. Jones.

Songs and items were rendered by "Joss" Jones, Bill Fagan, Sandy Powell, R.N., Ernie Chuck, and Harry Treadwell. J. B. Smith, D.C.O., was on the piano.

The gathering closed at 10.30 with Auld Lang Syne and the King, George being escorted home with his presents by several members of the staff.

E. A. C.

Southampton Notes

To all Sotonians, home or overseas, we send the very best of good wishes for Christmas, 1943, and for the year ahead. May your home return be not long delayed, meanwhile, as our fifth war-time Christmas approaches, our thoughts are with you wherever you may be.

News is brief this month, but we have had the great pleasure of welcoming home, after 2½ years overseas, our Lancashire lad, Cliff Pearson, and very fit and well he is looking. Cliff will leave the bachelor ranks in the very near future, we hear. His "winger," the inimitable Joe, is too far away to be the best man to Cliff, but he is our best man for regular mail, and his latest air-mail includes "extra large smiles" to the boys.

From Canada we have more good news from L.A.C. Jack Welsh, who is hard at it, U/T Navigator. Jack writes in detail of some pleasant forty-eights spent over the border at Detroit, and of his experiences in meeting the average Yank "man-in-the-street" on various social occasions. The hospitality which Jack has enjoyed in Canada and the U.S.A. has been great-hearted, and confirms the reports of our other lads who have crossed the Western Ocean for overseas training or operations.

Peter Ryan, also L.A.C. U/T, in Canada, is quite well, and as he is close to Quebec and Montreal he is able to visit these cities occasionally, and, with Jack, he should have plenty to tell us when he returns home.

Sub-Lieut. J. L. Abbott, R.N.V.R., (of whom we share some pleasant recollections during our D.D. spell at Runcorn in 1940), of October "Spotlight" fame, passed through our local waters in late October; he was in fine fettle and looking forward to some well-earned leave. Best of luck, Jack.

Of the exiles we have pleasing news from Maryport, Silloth, Manchester, and Runcorn, not forgetting Greenock and Glasgow, with their large Southern influence. A November visitor to 29 Berth was A. W. J. Robson ("Robbie" to you), who is still at Partington, on the Manchester Ship Canal, in between Home Guard attendances and what not. At home there is little fresh to tell you, but 1944 may see some changes in the old port, including, we hope, a revival of P.S.A. interest. The boys remain well, and one of them, Teddy Oliver, is leaving us shortly, on transfer to Newport, Mon., where we all hope he will have a congenial spell of service. It is seven years since Teddy came to Soton from Dover, and we are sorry to be saying cheerio to him. His departure will bring pleasure to one of his colleagues though, as it will mean the home return of another 1940 D.D. man. Whispers of early 1944 promotions only serve to keep our three prospective P.O.S. in a continued state of uncertainty, which has been their lot since 1940. Cheerio! Forces! L. B.

"Sunderland Calling"

Hello, Forces!

I have had no news from the Forces this month, but from enquiries I have made, they are all well.

I contacted the Big Boy's Lady recently, and Eddie is fit and well.

Stan Gill has returned to his Depot from leave. Stan is typical of the Silent Service, for he said very little about his experiences, though it is evident from his appearance that he has had a very rough passage. We all wish him health and a speedy return to the fold.

I learn from friend Sutton, that he ran across Griffie recently. He was fit and well, and looking forward to a spot of leave. Good luck, Griffie.

Our exiles have all reported this month, some by person, others by mail. The most important and interesting piece of news concerns our budding Don R. Crosby.

To Jack and his lady, "Heartiest Congratulations" on the arrival of a son and heir. You now have a companion for golf, Jack. Good luck, Jack.

Bill Sutton dropped a line recently. He appears to have at last settled the lodging problem other than the 7s. 6d. a night stunt. He appeared to be well browned off. Hope that cold is better, Bill, and the tummy behaving properly once more. Our pal Bill Barlow, of whom we both have pleasant memories, was enquiring about your welfare. Good luck, Bill, all's well.

George Simmons dropped in while doing a week-end at home. Same old George. One thing rationing does not appear to have any effect on him, for he is as solid as ever. Any news, George? Keep smiling.

AMAZINGLY HIGH CASH PRICES PAID
for FUR COATS, SWAGGERS and SILVER FOXES from Private Owners.
CASH BY RETURN OF POST. Parcels to
MR. HARRY, 41-2 PARLIAMENT STREET, S.W.1.

Our other exile, Tom Coffey, returned from Manchester last month, having been recalled. From all accounts he enjoyed his sojourn with the rummage crew and was somewhat loath to leave. We were pleased to welcome him back to the fold.

The Festive Season approaches fast, and many of you are a long way from home.

To you all, Forces and Exiles, we extend to you, the "Compliments of the Season," and may the New Year bring you peace and a speedy return to the fold.

The old shack having been recently washed down should be cleaner, but it's still the same old shack and our flag is mast high. Good luck to you all.

Cheerio, Forces! Over to you—over.

O. H. L.

Plymouth Notes

Six months ago the Landing Officer, who then held the post of Vice-Chairman of the Local Whitley Committee resigned from it, and, for the first time in history, an A.P.O., Mr. G. T. Clarke, was elected to the post. He was, of course, only elected for six months, more or less "on probation." However, at the annual meeting he was formally elected for the forthcoming year and the Officers passed a resolution thanking him for the way in which he had carried out his duties in the last six months.

In addition to being an honour for Mr. Clarke, I think this may be regarded as an honour for the whole grade and one more sign of approaching better status for the Waterguard.

One further note: the better status will only come if we all get in and back up our Association.

J. McA.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,

The suggestion that there is a manpower shortage in the Waterguard is extremely interesting. Indeed, it is rather surprising that it should be put forward just at this period of the war when manpower for the military forces is probably the most urgent problem facing the Government to-day. Recent debates in the House of Commons and speeches by responsible Ministers can leave little doubt in our minds on that point. Therefore, I sincerely hope that those entrusted with the report on the situation in this department realise the importance of a very thorough examination into the matter, investigating the work actually performed at the smaller and less busy Ports besides those which are known to have their full quota of work.

I agree with your correspondents in the last issue of the "Customs Journal" that the problem of manpower, if such a problem exists, can be solved within our own ranks in the manner they suggest. May I add the suggestion of a quicker appreciation of the staff requirements of the various ports and a greater mobility of staff in order that periodical "rushes" of work in certain parts could be met by the temporary importation of officers to cover the extra work while it lasts. And surely the redundant C.P.M.s could be more usefully employed in the waterguard than releasing them to the Coastguard, etc. Are not these just the men to take over the less important and less arduous work of the A.P.O. grade?

The United Nations will shortly be engaged in the gigantic task of invading Western Europe, and every man who can, must be spared for the military forces. The tendency amongst some ranks of the department to overestimate the importance and the amount of work performed in relation to the Nation's war effort must be disregarded. At such a time any call for an increase of staff must be very seriously considered and every possible alternative examined before decided upon.

Personally, I feel sure that with a reshuffling of staff and more use made of the C.P.O. grade it would be found possible to release those officers who wished to join the forces and improve on their now somewhat puny contribution to the war effort.

G. B.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

The letters over the signature "Jaco" and "R" in the October issue of "Customs Journal," touch on one of the most important points regarding Staffing and Reorganisation.

To me it has always seemed farcical that Boarding and other duties should require the team of P.O. and A.P.O. I presume it had some advantage long ago but at the present time it seems to have little but disadvantage. Can anyone who has experience of the boarding of H.M. Ships from foreign, for instance, to quote just one case, say that the team can possibly do the duties as apparently envisaged by the Official Side? It is about time that all of us—C.P.O.s, P.O.s, and A.P.O.s—made an honest report of our work and admitted the unworkability of present arrangements.

Whereas the increase of work and responsibility makes itself obvious in other Departments, in the Waterguard the Staff has been responsible for hiding any such increase by using the A.P.O. in a false capacity. The P.O.s are mostly to blame as they seem to fear an official delegation of some of their work to A.P.O.s, and so prefer to resort to bluff.

The answer, of course, is either 1, The need for more P.O.s, or 2, Some minor responsibilities of the P.O. Grade could be allocated to A.P.O.s of a certain seniority. In the latter case—which I suggest as a wartime measure, pending reorganisation—P.O.s and A.P.O.s could be used independently and no longer teamed as at present into Boarding Crews.

This could be done now—without waiting for a general reorganisation of the service—and supervising officers could report on it at the end of a trial period. It would, of course, be successful.

But, perhaps the Official Side would consider that 1. Such a step is too obviously sensible. 2. That the old Civil Service slogan of "No risks—however slight" still holds; war or no war.

Yours sincerely,

"LOGICUS."

The Editor "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

The end of Mr. Wales' letter was a very discreet one.

I do not intend to contest any of the many debatable points contained in Mr. S. W. Dutton's letters, but will content myself with saying that to my mind he should have given as much attention to the first sentence of Mr. Wales' letter as he did to the last.

I venture to suggest that we in the Waterguard are realists with a practical job of work to do. We have not the time nor inclination to deal with hypothetical Governments; we are dealing with facts as they are. Mr. Winston Churchill has given us the lead and Mr. S. W. Dutton solved the problem of affiliation to the T.U.C. Mr. Winston Churchill in his speech at the Mansion House, on 9/11/43, said "... This is no time for persons who have practical work to do to dream rosy dreams of brave new worlds."

Mr. S. W. Dutton in his September letter says "Admitting that we are a long way from true democracy, would such a step be towards or away from our target? Plutocratic democracy (our existing one) will unhesitatingly say yes."

Personally I'm all for it too.

TARTAN.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,

From practical experience I am of the opinion that the wartime innovation of sixteen hours watches as against separate watches of 4/12 and 12/8 is a great improvement of the pre-war scheme. The physical and mental strain of a week of nights (where officers under local arrangements often do ten and above hours per night) is definitely overcome by having every other night off, and I would like to see this scheme retained for all time.

Yours faithfully,

D.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal,"

Dear Mr. Editor,

You know, one of the things that always appealed to me in the Waterguard was the spirit of matiness, the absence of all snobbery, that one found throughout the service, and believe me, after several years of slavery in a bank, that was certainly something.

Imagine my surprise on seeing, in your October issue, an effusion from a certain Mr., sorry, Lieutenant J. W. H. Berry, R.N.V.R., which seems to have strayed from the columns of the twopenny daily.

Come, come, Lieutenant, this seems a vastly different person from J. W. H. Berry, A.P.O. A naval officer doesn't wear a gaberdine with a belt indeed; poor soul! They would be "appalled by such a suggestion"; tut, tut! Seems to me that some, I repeat "some," of the little pip-squeaks are very easily appalled. He doesn't wish to be confused with the ratings, "good fellows" of course, damned good fellows begad—breeding and all that.

Now listen Jack, you're having fun now, with your two gold rings, but promise me you won't bring that overriding spirit back with you, please! It's terrible, so's our Customs uniform, I quite agree with you there, but that's not the way to set about it. You're the same little guy that was once an A.P.O. you know, in spite of your natty doe-skin.

I've served with a rating that was a baronet, and another who received £50 a month pocket money, and they didn't mind wearing belts on their gaberdines. Try not to be appalled, sailor, sorry I mean "sir," or else some of those Arab firemen are going to come a bit hard on you.

Thanks Mr. Editor,

Sincerely,

MAX DUNSTONE.

(One-time A.P.O., now a rating, thank goodness!)

We observe that Gaberdine is the correct spelling.—ED.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal,"

Sir,

In the October issue of the Journal, under the heading "Greenock News," your correspondent, in reporting a P.S.A. meeting held at Cardwell Bay, referred to "a message received earlier in the day stating that Mr. Grant would be unable to attend, as he had not been able to get an exchange of duties"; and followed this up with the statement, "the message added that although the C.P.O. was willing to grant the necessary exchange, the P.O.s concerned objected."

It is true that I was unable to attend the meeting referred to because I could not get an exchange of watch. But in informing Greenock of my inability to attend, which I did on the night prior to the meeting, by the way, and not on the day following, as reported in the Journal, *I did not state that objection on the part of "the P.O.s concerned"* was the reason. I said that with the consent of our respective P.O.s an exchange of watch had been arranged with one of my colleagues, and ratified by the C.P.O.; but that at the last moment the change could not be implemented.

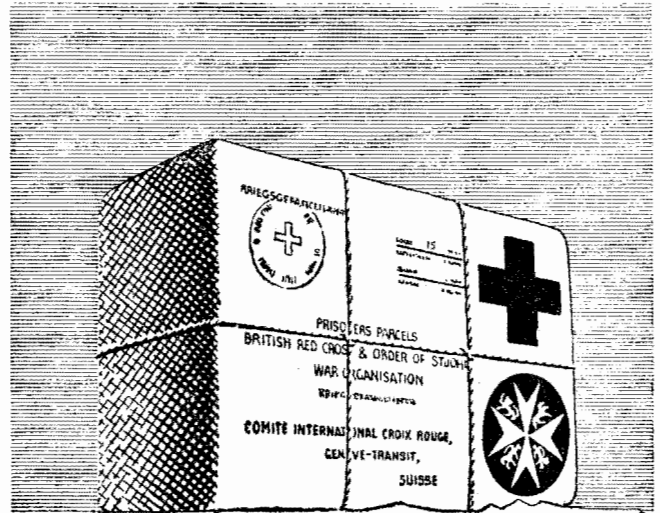
It should be unnecessary for me to recall that all arrangements, whether of a personal or P.S.A. nature, are subject to the exigencies of the Service. I do so, however, because the implication of the statement attributed to me was not only that an act of sabotage against the Association had been committed by the P.O. grade in Glasgow, but that the authority of the C.P.O. grade had been deliberately flouted.

I trust that this correction of what was, I am sure, an unwitting misrepresentation of fact will suffice to remove any doubt concerning the loyalty of the P.O. grade in Glasgow to the P.S.A.; and acquit them of a charge of discourtesy to their superiors or lack of consideration to their subordinates, which is as unfounded as it is unfair.

J. C. GRANT, A.P.O.,

Councillor, Scotland
and Northern Ireland Area.

[We regret that through lack of space correspondence from L. W. Cumberland, "Exile" and Still Hopeful, and other items are unavoidably held over.—ED.]



many others echoed: "It was the Red Cross parcels that kept us alive all this time. I never realised until I was a prisoner myself what the Red Cross really meant."

'It was the Red Cross parcels that kept us alive!'

This is what a repatriated prisoner of war recently told the press on reaching Gothenburg from Germany on his way to England. He added "I never realised until I was a prisoner myself what the Red Cross really meant."

The Red Cross and St. John require vast sums to maintain this great work and their many services for the sick and wounded. Will you do your bit to help?

PLEASE

GIVE AN EXTRA PENNY A WEEK TO THE RED CROSS PENNY-A-WEEK FUND

Red Cross & St. John Fund, registered under the War Charities Act, 1940