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 Official Journal of the
**CUSTOMS & EXCISE
 PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION**

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MARCH, 1944

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CURRENT COMMENTS

Our Birthday Anniversary.

FORTY years—and still going strong. This does not sound very original, but it is apt and it is true. Forty years of Service journalism of a standard equal to the best—serving the members in the Departmental field and watching their interests in the national sphere.

We glance back with pardonable pride, tinged perhaps with a regret that several of the grievances referred to in the earlier issues are still with us, but we look ahead with an inspired hope that at long last the Waterguard will come into its own.

Forty years completed but not a thought of retiring. On the contrary, we are all set for even greater activities during the next forty years.

P. A. Y. E.

Notwithstanding W. J. Brown's eloquence, the Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to see no merit in the claim of permanent Civil Servants that they should not be deprived of a benefit corresponding to that granted to outside

taxpayers, simply because they have always paid their income tax months in advance of other Schedule E taxpayers.

The Service claim was, as Brown said, one of astonishing modesty. It did not seek adjustment now, but merely a credit note for the seven-months rebate to be operative in the last year of service.

Certain details arising from the initial working of P.A.Y.E. are under discussion Departmentally. In the main these relate to instances where money is earned before 5th July, 1944, but, as it will not be paid until after this date, will fall to be taxed under P.A.Y.E., e.g., overtime, seizure rewards, etc.

Immunisation at Airports.

Transport Command have issued instructions that all personnel connected with the reception of aircraft at a large Scottish airport should be afforded protection against smallpox, tetanus, typhoid, paratyphoid and typhus. Members of the Preventive Grades are included in the list circulated by the Senior Medical Officer, R.A.F.

There is no doubt whatever that personnel receiving aircraft and handling personal effects of passengers and crews within twelve hours of leaving "infected" places run a far greater risk than arises, say, in connection with boarding a ship from the same place. In the latter case the period of voyage would normally exceed the period of incubation and cases of infection on board would be known at the time of "quarantine" boarding and every precaution would be taken.

A recent case (Mount Vernon Hospital) emphasises this risk.

Smallpox brought from abroad by a soldier who arrived from the Middle East by air resulted in several deaths, and cases of smallpox reported in other parts of the country have been traced back to this original case.

We were pleased to note that in considering the Transport Command's instructions the Board decided that immunisation should not be compulsory but at the expressed wish of the officer. There are, however, other aspects of this matter on which we are not so pleased. Other grades are, of course, affected, so the P.S.A. have raised the question with the Joint Committee (C. & E. Associations).

War Bonus.

Three items related to War Bonus.

Firstly, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has conceded the claim (in part at least) that war bonus should be paid to State pensioners.

Secondly, the war bonus element of Civil Service pay is to be included in the calculation of pensions.

And thirdly, Civil Servants on salaries between £850 and £1,000 (actually about £1,050, due to the "escalator clause") are to receive war bonus as from the 1st February, 1944.

Staffing of Airports.

Discussions on this matter were continued at the February meeting of the Departmental Council. The Staff Side still felt that the 1927 Report decisions should be embodied in the Civil Aircraft Instructions. They welcomed the statement regarding post-war developments, and accepted—without prejudice—the Official Side assurances as to consultation with the Staff Side on modifications of the staffing arrangements at aerodromes found to be advisable as a result of reviews. The Staff Side were of opinion that local consultation on aerodrome work should be as automatic as that pertaining to other

local staffing problems. They felt that the Local Staff Side should be a party to initial *ad hoc* arrangements as well as quarterly reviews, and that local consultation on these arrangements should take place prior, and not subsequent, to approval of the arrangements.

The Official Side said they had no objection to local consultation on initial *ad hoc* staffing arrangements, but considered that such consultation should follow the submission of the Collector's proposals to the Board. They felt that consultations should not be duplicated, particularly as the arrangements for these new aerodromes were usually matters of extreme urgency and called for immediate action.

The Council adjourned the matter for informal discussions.

These informal talks have taken place and we are given to understand that there is an indication of an agreed line of policy on the earliest possible consultation with the Local Staff Side.

Mr. J. H. Higginson.

Mr. J. H. Higginson, Principal, and member for some years of the Waterguard Sectional Committee (Official Side), retires from the Service this month at the age of 62.

When Mr. Higginson took over Waterguard items in the Secretary's Office it was not his first meeting with us. Long before many of us had entered the Department, Mr. Higginson had a very intimate contact and knowledge of the Branch, as proved by his fund of stories (not all flattering) of conditions about the time when Mr. Elliott, Inspector, reigned supreme.

We have always found Mr. Higginson to be one who would listen with sympathy and understanding to the Staff Side case, but who would not hesitate to expose its weaknesses.

He takes with him in his retirement our very sincere wishes and thanks.

C. & E. Federation Secretary.

Mr. W. E. Blackborow has been appointed as one of the Secretaries to the C. & E. Federation in the vacancy created by the call-up of Mr. Burgess.

On taking up this post, Mr. Blackborow relinquishes the position of Staff Side Secretary to the Suggestions Committee, which he had held, one can say, with great distinction for several years. Mr. H. E. Buckingham, Officer, has been elected to fill this post.

ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS

In accordance with Rule 4, 2 (b) of the Constitution of the Association, the election of Grade Councillors in the Areas set out below is announced. Nominations on the form printed herewith are requested.

Election of C.P.O. GRADE COUNCILLORS in each of the following areas :—

London, Liverpool, South Wales and Hull.

Election of P.O. GRADE COUNCILLORS in each of the following areas :—

South-East, South-West, Tyne and Scotland.

Election of A.P.O. GRADE COUNCILLORS in each of the following areas :—

London, Liverpool, South Wales and Hull.

The Electoral Areas are as follows :—

LONDON.

LIVERPOOL : Comprising Liverpool, Manchester and Preston Districts.

SOUTH WALES : Comprising Cardiff, Swansea and Bristol Districts.

SOUTH-EAST : Comprising Gravesend, Harwich and Dover Districts.

SOUTH-WEST : Comprising Southampton and Plymouth Districts.

HULL : Comprising Hull and Grimsby Districts.

TYNE : Comprising Tyne and Hartlepool Districts.

SCOTLAND : Comprising Leith, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Greenock and Belfast Districts.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION.

ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS

NOMINATION FORM.

We, being two members of the above Association, hereby nominate

Mr. as the Grade Representative
for the Area.

Signature.....

Signature.....

I accept nomination.

Signature.....

This Form should be sent to the Organising Secretary, P.S.A.,
6, Brook Lane, Bexley, Kent. Closing date 22nd April, 1944.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT MEETING

A general meeting of the Liverpool Branch of the P.S.A. was held at the Landing Stage at 5 p.m. on Monday, 28th February, 1944, when Mr. L. W. Hyland occupied the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and adopted. Arising therefrom, it was decided to agree to defer action regarding the removal of the concrete shrapnel protection slabs on the launch for four months, proposed by Mr. C. P. Titherley, seconded by Mr. W. C. Hughes.

The question of the provision of refreshments for staff retained on duty for baggage over the eight hours' spell was discussed at length. The report of the District Secretary upon his conversations on the subject with the Waterguard Superintendent showed that although some improvement was probable, nothing definite could be fixed at this juncture.

Several speakers pointed to the fact that other services working the ships had a hot meal provided when their staffs were required to work 10 hours or more, whereas our department had apparently taken no similar steps to provide for the welfare of the staff, even though prolonged attendances had become frequent, with spells of 14 or 15 hours being recorded.

The difficulties of the department were fully understood; it was agreed that with no adequate prior notification of arrivals and varying numbers of staff engaged, the problem was very intricate. The difficulties applied also to the staff, however, for they already carried a cold meal to cover the 8 hours' spell, and certainly could not, in these days of food problems, carry a second meal every day to cover only intermittent use, while to obtain food outside during a short spell of relief from the baggage floor was virtually impossible under present conditions. It was also argued that one hot meal was essential to health where such long spells were being worked in cold baggage halls.

Finally, a resolution was proposed by Mr. S. Lyons, seconded by Mr. B. L. Dodd, "That in cases where Baggage examination requires staff to attend 10 hours or over in any continuous spell the Crown should require the shipping

company concerned to arrange to supply a meal for the officers engaged."

This resolution met with general approval, the proposer and his supporters maintaining that where prolonged spells of duty were required it was incumbent upon the Crown as the employer to make proper provision for the welfare of the staff. Examples such as factory and docks canteens were cited.

The chairman suggested that it might be wiser to see whether there was any improvement in the position before proceeding further, and it was agreed to adopt this course and defer the resolution till a later meeting.

The next item referred to Staffing. It was reported that the District Secretary had received from the Official Side a proposal calling for staff reductions at the North docks to cover the provision of staff, previously agreed as necessary, at Brombro' and Speke. It was reported that as an early reply had been asked for by the Official Side, the local Executive Committee had called a special meeting to consider the matter. They had examined the proposals from every angle and they had reached the conclusion:

- (1) that the proposals were impracticable and unworkable;
- (2) that the present state of work at the North docks did not justify any reduction whatever—in fact, an increase was rapidly becoming necessary;

and they had indicated these views to the Official Side through the District Secretary.

Members of the Executive Committee outlined the proposals to the meeting and explained the many reasons which had led to their conclusions. From the barrage of criticism of the proposals it was soon obvious that all present supported the views of the Executive Committee. It was proposed by Mr. W. F. Grosart, seconded by Mr. R. G. Roberts, "That this meeting fully endorses the views expressed and the action taken by the Executive Committee in this matter."

Upon the resolution being carried unanimously, it was stated that the staff side had already indicated to the official side alternative means by which the necessary staff might be found within the port, only for these means to be rejected by the official side. It now appeared that a deadlock had been reached, the only

solution of which was constitutional action in Whitley. Mr. Grosart proposed, seconded by Mr. J. F. A. Donnelly. "That the matter should be brought to the early notice of the Vice-Chairman of the Local Joint Whitley Council with a view to its being placed on the agenda." This resolution was also carried unanimously.

The foregoing discussions led to further questions on the whole subject of man power. It was obvious that future military operations might require staff transfers and alterations. It was proposed by Mr. R. L. Walmsley, seconded by Mr. R. G. Roberts, "That this meeting agrees to the principle that if and when military operations require it, the A.P.O. grade should be prepared to work up to 12 hours per day." A supplementary resolution by Mr. F. Ledson, seconded by Mr. J. S. Flaxman, "That members of the P.O. grade should not be required to work over 8 hours per day until all vacancies in the grade have been filled" was also put, both resolutions being carried unanimously.

On the subject of Office Accommodation, power to act in the case of Garston and Speke was delegated to the Executive Committee. In respect of Gladstone it was reported that a 9 ft. by 5 ft. hut provided by the Naval authorities for the search of personnel was almost ready for use. The size of the building was criticised, and whilst it was agreed that it was suitable for the search of individuals one at a time, it could in no way be accepted by the staff as forming part of the permanent office accommodation of Gladstone Station. It was proposed by Mr. W. C. Hughes, seconded by Mr. F. W. Skinner, and carried "That the District Secretary be instructed to write to Waterguard Superintendent and obtain the necessary assurance."

The question of increased subsistence allowance for detached duty officers in view of recent increases awarded to comparable industrial workers was raised. It was decided to give full support to any move in this direction. Proposed, Mr. Skinner; seconded, Mr. A. Dodge.

This concluded the business, and the meeting ended at 7.30 p.m. with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

BILL HUGHES.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

To 13th March, 1944.

TRANSFERS

Preventive Officer:

Snow, H. W., Chatham, London to Gravesend, London.

Assistant Preventive Officer:

Tarr, W. J., Liverpool to Glasgow.

PROMOTION

Assistant Preventive Officer to Preventive Officer (Acting):

Laurenson, R. C. G., Gravesend, London to Liverpool.

In our February issue Particulars under Promotions were incorrectly reported. The items should read:—

Waterguard Surveyor to Assistant Inspector (Acting and Unattached):

Colwill, W. A., Birkenhead, Liverpool.

Chief Preventive Officer to Waterguard Surveyor (Acting and Unattached):

Busby, A. E., Middlesbrough, Sunderland.

OFFICERS LEAVING THE SERVICE

Retirement:

Preventive Officer:

Atwell, P. E. B., Cardiff.

Death:

Preventive Officer:

Jordan, J. F., Newcastle.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS

Arnold, H., Preventive Officer.

French, J. H., Preventive Officer.

Gay, J., Preventive Officer.

McCarthy, J., Preventive Officer.

CIVIL SERVICE WAR DISTRESS FUND

The recent air raids have resulted in damage and loss to many civil servants, and more than 80 air-raid-damage grants were made by the Fund in the first 10 days following the resumption of the air raids on a heavy scale.

The approaching invasion is likely to bring in its train much greater demands on the Fund.

If you are not already contributing to the Fund which sets out to assist you and your dependants in financial distress as the result of the war, please approach the agent of the Fund in your office and start contributing now by authorising a small deduction from your salary.

If you have suffered from enemy action, apply for assistance to the office agent.

HEAVY PENALTIES IN CIGAR SMUGGLING CASE

Owen Ferris, Irish cattle dealer, and Conrad Cecil Nash, horse slaughterer (formerly Assistant Manager, Midland Bank, Ltd., West Smithfield), appeared at Bow Street on 3rd March, 1944, before Mr. Harold McKenna. Ferris had previously been arrested and charged with knowingly dealing with 10,125 uncustomed cigars, the T.V.D. on which was £12,150. In addition, he answered summonses (1) for dealing with the same goods with intent to evade the prohibition, and (2) for selling tobacco without licence. Nash was summoned for knowingly dealing with 7,135 uncustomed cigars (T.V.D. £8,562), for dealing with the same goods with intent to evade the prohibition, and for dealing in tobacco without a licence.

Mr. Coutts, of the Solicitor's Office, represented the Crown. Both defendants were represented by Mr. G. O. Slade, K.C., and Mr. Anthony Gordon, of Counsel instructed by Messrs. Martyns & Gane, Solicitors. On behalf of Ferris a plea of not guilty was entered on the charge, and pleas of guilty were entered on the two summonses. Nash pleaded not guilty to the two summonses brought under Section 186 of the C.C. Act, and guilty to the summons for selling tobacco without licence. Evidence was given by Mr. C. Simison, of the Special Inquiry Staff, who proved that Ferris had paid a man in Eire for running the 10,125 cigars across the border into Northern Ireland and had then arranged for the goods to be left at a public house in Belfast, to be picked up later by men who brought greyhounds from Belfast to England, and who, while engaged on these journeys, carried the cigars to Ferris in London. It was also given in evidence that Ferris had sold large quantities of these cigars through the agency of Nash and that over 6,000 of the cigars had been seized by the Customs.

The magistrate said that he found all the charges proved. He said that the case might prove to be one of the biggest smuggling cases of modern days, and he inflicted the following penalties:

Ferris—£10,000 and 6 months imprisonment plus £50 costs.

Nash—£2,010 plus £25 costs.

Cardiff Notes

A changed venue, York Hotel, saw the first P.S.A. meeting of 1944.

For at least 20 years these meetings have been held at the Old Arcade Hotel, but an enforced early closure since the war meant a too abrupt termination of our meetings.

The venue, or the agenda, drew the best crowd with the greatest enthusiasm for several years.

Both Councillors for the Area were present, and both were subjected to searching cross-examination on the subject of Re-organisation. Whilst accepting the favourable account given by Mr. Bevan, P.O. councillor, the meeting awaits additional news and fresh developments. Appreciation of the efforts of Mr. Grice, A.P.O. councillor, was recorded.

A little more news (indirectly) this month gives us the following information.

R. R. Jones, R.N., operating afloat from Soton reports fit and well.

Sub. Lieut. Tipples at Pompey would like a change of air. Change and not decay is Tip's motto.

Sub. Lieut. Tom Collins has had his share of excitement since joining the R.N. A spot of trouble in the Med., back to this country, and then mine-sweeping. An encounter in which an E-Boat came off best sees Tom and other shipmates recuperating in hospital at Lewes.

Stan. Couchman, Pilot Officer, looked in on us and appears very fit after his S. African training. He brought us news of Albert Harrison and Ossie Jones, still in the Union, and Arthur Hazzard in the Middle East. We admired Stan's great-coat and cap and think there are ideas in that kind of outfit that the Wed. could imitate. Still no news of H. I. Jones or Batt.

On Saturday, 26th February, Mr. P. Atwill, P.O. (Pop) retired from the Service at Cardiff after exceeding his allotted time by several years. An appreciation of his services to the P.S.A. was recorded at our meeting held on the 1st March.

A fairly big job broke here (Newnort) during February, in which 20,000 cigarettes were involved. It was a hard nut to crack, and it took the Borough Police Court to do it eventually.

Mr. Tarrant, Wgd. Surveyor, conducted the prosecution and the offenders were fined £25 and £50 respectively. F. S. L.

Ask a Bobby

I emphasised last month that we are not a clerical grade. It would indeed be difficult, when the Civil Service is fighting for rights and pay equal to comparable bodies outside, to find a job in the non-bureaucratic world equivalent to ours. In some ways we resemble the police, but there are great differences. And we do not seek such a comparison. But similarities are not to be ignored, and it is interesting to find that service faced, as we are, with a problem of training (for you can discover a clerk merely by examining him) and, as we have not done, solving it.

There is, of course, an examination for entry into the police, the pre-1914 standard being similar to ours. But since the introduction of a police training centre—Peel House in London, the Provinces making their own arrangements for the most part—on which a start was made 10 years before the last war, a candidate possessing a School Certificate or its equivalent was not only exempted from sitting the entrance exam. (which I would not advocate for our service), but is exempt from sitting the exam. for sergeant or inspector. Similar exemption from exam. for promotion is given to candidates passing out with a good mark from the entrance exam.

Now, since the Police Strike after the last war and the resulting Desborough Report, constables receive between £4 and £6 a week, which is roughly the pay of an A.P.O. with a fair amount of service. Sergeants get £6 to £8, which gives a rough parallel with the P.O.'s remuneration. If the Police feel that the academically capable officer on entry, **when trained**, is fit to go further without another exam., as is also the practice in the Officer Grade (regarding U.O.'s in this instance as being equivalent to A.P.O.s), why the discrimination in the Preventive Service? Why am I still an A.P.O. after fifteen years? And you? And you?

A constable is not an assistant sergeant, yet if he is the right type he is assured of his three stripes. The Board have had the right type for fifteen years or so and will doubtless see that it continues to get them. Then it can cut the exam. for P.O. right out.

This does not mean that the satisfac-

tory type academically can, even when trained, perform the full range of the P.O.'s duties. The Executive was clear on that in its Reorganisation Report, and the Council of 1943 backed them up. The Board must satisfy itself, as the Police no doubt do in the constable to sergeant case, that the new entrant is fit for the higher duties and when he shall do them. Meanwhile, as a constable can always "act" as a sergeant, the A.P.O.s can always have duties delegated to them (as they are delegated to them now in an "under the counter" way, which is neither satisfactory to the P.O. nor the A.P.O.), **and the man who has a duty delegated to him shall be responsible for performing that duty.**

In that case the "Assistant" part of the title may be dropped, but it must be clear that in the early years he is incapable, through lack of experience as a rule, of the higher duties of a P.O.

Now let us look at the Police again. Their uniforms are better, they get one day off in seven (as I write I have not had one day off in that number of weeks!), promotion is brisk and retirement early. Official cars are common and records and information exact and well distributed. We'll labour nothing here, for we know how different our work is from theirs and often much more responsible. But it makes you think. Since 1933 those who have controlled the Police have been conscious of changed conditions and have kept up with them. The old country-bred copper is passing away as Charlie, the watch, passed away.

Are the controllers of our destinies as conscious of the metamorphosis from boatman to preventive man, from P.M. to fully capable Customs Officer, of the A.P.O.? Whether they know it or not, it has taken place. The P.O.s know it. (See B. A. Benning, "The Customs Journal," November, 1943). It is not too late, in the matter of training, to catch up with the Police.

The newly enrolled copper does eleven weeks at Peel House. This school, which is off the Vauxhall Road, is also a hostel with a palm court as well as a lecture-room and a library. Civvies are worn. Life here is that of a club, a change from the life of the average probationer A.P.O. away from home, perhaps for the first time in his life.

The staff of the school is drawn from serving men and retired officers. The training finishes with a test in practice and theory. During the training period unsuitable men are simply weeded out (a deal of trouble later being thereby saved). If the neophyte passes, he has twelve weeks outside under the wing of an inspector. Then he returns to Peel House for final passing-out. And then he has two years probation. The P.S.A. is for the maintenance of the one-year probationship, but it advocates a slightly longer period of training: 26 weeks instead of 23.

If we had had such, what a service this might now be! We've had good men, as those on Active Service have clearly shown, and they have done well. But surely there's room for improvement and, unless revenue protection is considered unimportant, that room should be filled up. The responsibilities of a constable are not so great as those of a conscientious Customs Officer.

Peel House, please notice, is not the much-talked-of "college" at Hendon. Entrants to that are intended not for the basic grade, but for higher posts, and are already constables. There is much in its curriculum from which, if education throughout the Preventive Service is ever taken as seriously as H. E. P. B. would like, we could learn. But the principle of leap-frogging promotion would not suit most of us. At Hendon they dress for dinner (rehearsing for later club raids?) and, though beer only is allowed during the day, the gentlemen may at dinner take a little wine or sherry. We have no desire to make O. Five turn in his bath-chair, and do not think these niceties essential. But we should see that the A.P.O. should not have the P.O.'s baton in his knapsack making him round-shouldered year and year, and training at the beginning is the way to end that injustice to the man and dead loss to the Crown. Some years ago someone in the Journal said: "Oh, for another Wilberforce." That's stretching it a bit—but we could do with a Trenchard.

(In 1935-36 articles appeared in the Journal outlining the exact form probation training could take. Re-reading them you might discover ways in which the scheme could be brought up to date. If so, let us know.)

C. F. S.

The Lads o' London

Several people have intimated their approval of the new Journal design, and those responsible for the change are to be congratulated upon the fruit of their labours.

We welcome home George Coppard, who has been away on detached duty for 3½ years, first in Greenock and then in Bangor, Co. Down, and our best wishes go to Alf Burt and Les Clift on their departure for Bangor and Liverpool respectively. London is beginning to look more like old times with so many of the younger element of the staff back again.

There was a generous response by the Liverpool staff to the appeal issued on behalf of the family of the late Jack Lindsay, and, in passing, may I pay tribute on behalf of the London detached duty officers to Mr. Dennitts Waterguard Appointer, and his able assistants for the wonderful way in which detached duty staff and their dependants have been helped by them.

Disappointment again came to Ken Buttenshaw and his family recently, as he was to have been one of those prisoners-of-war to be repatriated last month. Unfortunately he, along with others, was misdirected, and so missed the boat. Two years ago he should have been sent home with wounded men, but got as far as Rouen and then the negotiations broke down between the two Governments. However, the German authorities have promised that the chaps who missed the boat will be given the first chance at the next exchange of prisoners. It is hoped that ere long Ken will be seen at home. He received a cigarette parcel from George Camburn the week before Christmas.

Mr. Stanley Wandless and the parents of our late colleague travelled to London to receive the Military Cross from H.M. the King recently, and they were subsequently able to meet the Chief. An air mail letter was received from Ben Battle in which he said that he had met a sergeant who was with Cyril Warner when he (Cyril) was killed. Apparently Cyril, after having been in action, went forward again for the purpose of evacuating the wounded, and in so doing received shots in the chest, from which he died instantly. His last action was one which we all know was typical of him. Ben, whilst reading a periodical given him in Cairo, came upon a short

naval story written by one Max Dunstone. He was convinced that it was Max of Mackintosh fame because of the type of humour and phraseology employed. Alan Bee has turned up in Ceylon after a long period spent in England, and is looking forward to some adventures out there. He wishes to hear from Jim Ayton again.

Congratulations are offered to Doug. Sommerville and his wife upon the gift of a son.

I regret that an erroneous account of the accident to Walter Varney appeared in January's Journal. He did not sustain his injuries through cycling, but fell on the stairs in the black-out at Brunswick Pier. Any member of the staff who has been stationed at Blackwall will of course know the tricky nature of the landings from the launch to the stage. He is progressing and hopes to be out of hospital soon. To end on a sad note, I regret to report that F/O. Tony Colan is missing from an operational flight.

Let's hear from you then.

Till the Lights o' London shine again.

R. J. L.

Southampton Notes

From the battlefront of Burma comes a letter of greeting and good tidings, written by Bill Nicolson, now Captain and Adjutant to a famous Ghurka Regiment. The past year has been one of hard slogging in India and Burma, and Bill, who was the Transport and Veterinary Officer, had a full-time job, earning his 1943 title of the "Old Mule Man."

From Ceylon, continued good news comes in from. Sergt. Charlie Cardall, R.A.F., although his current letter moans about the lack of adventure, despite his near shaves in Java prior to the Japanese occupation and his own last-minute exit.

Other overseas mail bears greetings from Joe and an indication that Jack Weiser and Peter Ryan may soon be home again after their R.A.F. training in Canada.

Jimmy James, after one year's overseas operations, arrived home during February and at the time of writing he is enjoying a well-earned spell of leave in S. Wales. Arthur Cheney was able to visit the Poole staff during February, and by all accounts he is very fit and as energetic as ever. Bill Foot, another of our R.N. pals, was in the Watch-house recently during a flying visit from Pompey. A proud father of a "young Bill," he looked in good form and better for the absence of his beard, which created such an impression in Detroit in 1942!

More wedding congratulations, and this time to our Ack-Ack friend Johnny and Mrs. (B. K.) Eyre-Walker. Johnny is now operating somewhere in Yorkshire and we are glad to know he is A1, even though he is browned off with Service life.

R.A.F. news comes from Ron Greenhalgh, now Flying Officer, stationed in S. Wales after a decent spell of instructing duties in N. Ireland. A rather hasty draft prevented Ron from saying cheerio to those friends and colleagues who entertained him so well at Derry.

Dudley Heal has been hard at it since his last leave visit, but he finds the time to write in racy vein and with pleasant recollections of the January reunion.

It interests us to know that Dudley's present C.O. is Wing-Commander Cheshire, who, as Squadron-Leader Cheshire, was the author of "Bomber Pilot," a war-time best seller. Jock Strachan is expected to look us up at 29 Berth during the Southern leave trip in early March, and as we haven't seen Jock since 1941 we are looking forward to his visit keenly.

The past month has seen several familiar faces in the old Watch-house, and we are glad to hear of the well-being of our exiled colleagues far and wide. Hope is high in many places of an early return to the South, but the only move to report to-day is the return to Manchester from Runcorn of friend Holly.

At home during February we had the sad news of the death of Mr. C. Nicholls, our former Collector, who had just retired after 44 years' service, twelve years of which he had served in Southampton. Cheerio, Forces!

L. B.

Plymouth Notes

On Friday, 17th March, at the Plymouth Watchhouse, Mr. Dove, C.P.O., was presented with a barometer on the occasion of his transfer to Avonmouth. Every member of the staff who could possibly attend was present, including Mr. Stanford, Superintendent, Mr. Finley, Surveyor (who made the presentation), Mr. Winder and Mr. Sinnott, C.P.O.'s. Everyone present made a short speech, the general tenor of the speeches being that Mr. Dove, by his unflinching courtesy and helpfulness and his knowledge of the job, had earned the respect and affection of every member of the staff. Several persons took advantage of the occasion to tender to him their personal thanks for assistance given in the past. The Plymouth staff is sorry to lose Mr. Dove, and he takes with him our heartiest good wishes for the future.

Many members of the Waterguard Department will be both sorry and glad to learn that Mr. F. J. Trevithick, ex-A.P.O., Plymouth, has been reported a prisoner of war in Germany. Fred was a Ft./Sergt. Navigator, R.A.F., and failed to return from a raid on Berlin. Judging by a letter received by Mrs. Trevithick from his Group Captain, Fred had won, as was to be expected, the same popularity among his R.A.F. colleagues as he had previously won in the Waterguard. The staff here proposes to send cigarettes to him periodically, through the Red Cross, as a mark of their continued friendship, and, incidentally, we hope that he will find waiting for him on his return a job worthy of his high abilities.

J. McA.

Sunderland Calling

Hello, Forces!

I have very little news for you this month.

The "Big Boy" reports being fit and well and looking forward to a spot of leave at his home. We shall not be receiving a visit from him this trip. Keep smiling and good luck.

Charlie Scarfe also reports being fit and well and looking forward to "Der Tag." I have also received a postcard from him supplied by "Overseas League

Tobacco Fund. He appeals for smokes for the boys; not to individuals, but to the boys in general—and they don't stay at base. £1 supplies 1,000 cigarettes, so what about it? If you are prepared to supply the cash I will do the necessary ordering and clerical stuff.

I ran into our old pal Stan Gill the other day. He was looking much better than the last time I saw him. He is still at the Depot and wished to be remembered to all.

Sam Myles is still off sick, and it looks as if Sam is definitely finished with the Launch service. We know he suffered a lot from his chest and the climate here is not kind to chest complaints. Couple that with his being trapped in a raid and the result is a long lay off. We hope you will make a good recovery in the end, Sam, so keep smiling.

The old Shack still stands, though it is more draughty, and our flag is mast high. Peaceful are our days and nights.

Keep smiling and good luck to you all.
Cheerio. Forces! Over to you—over.

O. H. L.

THE CUSTOMS FUND

NOTICE

The Annual Meeting of subscribers to the Customs Annuity and Benevolent Fund, Incorporated, will be held in the Refreshment Club (Ground Floor), City Gate House, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2, on Thursday, the 27th April, 1944, at five o'clock p.m., in accordance with the provisions of Rule 28; also for the purpose of electing three Directors and one Auditor in the place of the undermentioned Gentlemen, who, in accordance with the provisions of Rules 20 and 21, go out of office on that day, but are respectively eligible for re-election.

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Secretary.

AVONMOUTH PRESENTATION

On the 15th March we gathered to say farewell to Mr. R. Sinnott, C.P.O., who returns to Plymouth. Mr. G. Jolliff, Surveyor, presided and opened with words of high praise for our C.P.O. Tribute was paid by Chief Inspector Bennett, representing the Police, and by Landing Officers, who manifested by their presence and eulogies their appreciation of Mr. Sinnott's work at Avonmouth. Mr. J. Perkins, C.P.O., spoke of his pleasant working association with his colleague, and wished him and his wife and family good health and happiness at Plymouth. Mr. F. G. Logan, representing the P.O.'s, spoke of pleasant relations existing between them, the encouragement he had given and the good-will he had fostered. Mr. F. Simpson, for the A.P.O.'s referred to his sympathetic understanding and his fatherly interest, and his good nature and kindness. He had made us a happy family. Mention was made of his harmonious co-operation with the Shipping fraternity. Mr. G. H. Jenkins, Waterguard Surveyor, spoke of a friendship which had lasted from his entry into the Service 38 years ago, and, wishing Mr. Sinnott and his wife and family the best of health and peace at Plymouth, he presented him with an electric clock, a token of the esteem in which he was held at Avonmouth.

Mr. Sinnott, in well-chosen words, thanked all present for the kind things said of him. He was leaving us, with much regret, for the betterment of his health.

We wish him the best of everything.

F. S.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

I have been interested in the correspondence relating to "executive" or "Navy" curl on the Waterguard uniforms. It is a pity to spoil a good story, but facts are stubborn.

The "curl" was introduced into the Navy as a sleeve ornament in 1856, and was in gold lace. The order states that "the upper row of lace round the sleeve is to form a circle in the centre."

In 1864, the officers at Gravesend petitioned the Board for permission to have two stripes of gold braid round the

cuff, but no action was taken until 1866, when the officers of London Port asked for a plain half-inch gold band round the cuff. The Board sanctioned an ornament of gold cord with a twisted loop (G.O. 12/1867) for Surveyors and Examining Officers. In 1893, this was extended to Chief Preventive Officers.

The first appearance of Naval decoration was in 1890, when the Commander of the "Vigilant" was ordered "Navy lace" on the sleeve. In 1900 this description was amplified to "three rows of half-inch gold braid with curl." In 1903, the description is "three rows of $\frac{3}{8}$ ths gold lace, top row with 'eye,'" and applied also to the First Mate, who had two rows.

The Waterguard come into the picture with the Establishment Code of 1906, based on the recommendations of the Committee of that year on the supply of uniforms. The order was that C.P.O.'s should wear "two rings of gold braid $\frac{3}{8}$ ths of an inch wide, the upper band to have a navy curl." The P.O.'s (Upper Section) to have one band with curl.

Yours faithfully,

B. R. LEFTWICH,
Librarian,
City Gate House.

To the Editor, "The Customs Journal."
Dear Sir,

I have been wanting for some time to write something of my impressions of Waterguard affairs from my present unusual viewpoint, but have hesitated to do so not knowing quite in what terms I might couch my survey. However, a few remarks by "G. B." in your February issue set me going. A strange inspiration, one might say, seeing that I cannot find myself agreeing with much of what "G. B." has to say.

Nevertheless, with his references to the encroachment of the arrogant Censorship and Security Controls I can feel whole-hearted sympathy. With regard to Censorship, it is particularly galling to have to suffer their interference while noticing their general lack of suitability for such a job. Quite honestly, the only member of this astonishing service I could find any respect for was an ex-Preventive Officer!

As to the Security Control—well, I am qualified to some extent to speak, having some time ago undergone the metamorphosis from blue to khaki and emerged a full-blown Security N.C.O. Although a great deal has been revealed to me that explains the wonderful

capacity displayed in the past by Security personnel for trampling on other people's corns, I must say that it has been my experience that the two controls, Customs and Security, now work side by side quite well and amicably.

I, too, have seen quite a lot of a mobile squad, complete with C.P.O. attached, and my heartfelt sympathy goes out to the unfortunate C.P.O. who has every reason to be very browned off. On the whole, however, real Intelligence Corps N.C.O.'s who have had complete I.C. training are more reasonable, though their training puts the accent on Military Field Security almost to the exclusion of its effect on maritime matters.

The fact that I and, I believe, not a few other A.P.O.'s have been welcomed with open arms by the I.C. Port Security Wing speaks volumes for the recognition by the I.C. of the great value to them of our unique experience. Apart, however, from accepting our services silently and without praise, they do not favour us in any way. In fact, I have noticed that on first joining this section I was looked upon with suspicion and by a subsequent O.C. with open hostility.

This suspicion and hostility was, I am afraid, in part engendered by the behaviour from time to time of a few misguided members of our service. These few erring ones can all too frequently cause friction between other controls and us, and if we are to progress they would do well to be more circumspect.

Latterly, however, I bask in the sunshine of a moderate popularity evinced by all ranks—probably they have come to understand something of the importance of our service and its specialised training.

This understanding works in both directions. Those A.P.O.'s, like myself, who have been called up, not only to the I.C. but to any of the services, act as our ambassadors to people who, in peace time, will constitute the "General Public." But we in the I.C. are able to actually demonstrate something of our skill, tact and diplomacy to our temporary colleagues whilst learning not a little from them and their experience in other fields.

That word temporary gives me the cue for my next point. I would like to point out to "G. B." that the present

state of affairs is only temporary. It is a simple psychological fact that in time of war the fighting Services are much "glamorised"—and rightly so—and, consequently, to use a colloquialism, they "get the gravy." Civil departments like ours are heard of in the din of cheers for the brave lads. In peace, however, the Armed Forces are pushed to the background and once more a more balanced frame of mind is enjoyed by everybody. So, "G. B.," you see it is morally certain that such controls as Censorship and Security will die a natural death soon after the cessation of hostilities and our service will gain on the rebound.

In preparation for this future of great opportunity, I notice with satisfaction the equally great activity on the part of our Association and the remarkable achievement (noted under "Current Comments" in the February issue) of making a united attack on these post-war reconstruction problems. This event seems to me to offer the brightest prospects so far. I have, to date, without giving much thought to the matter, taken full advantage of the P.S.A.'s concession to the Forces members regarding "subs," but in view of recent progress it behoves us all to support our representatives in every way.

I would end by saying that it will be easily understood with what clearer and more critical vision one may see one's own service when looking at it from the ranks of a rival service, and although I long to get back to the old job again—a much improved old job, I hope—I would not have missed this opportunity to "see ourselves as others see us."

Yours sincerely,

C. H. RABBITTS,
Int. Corps.

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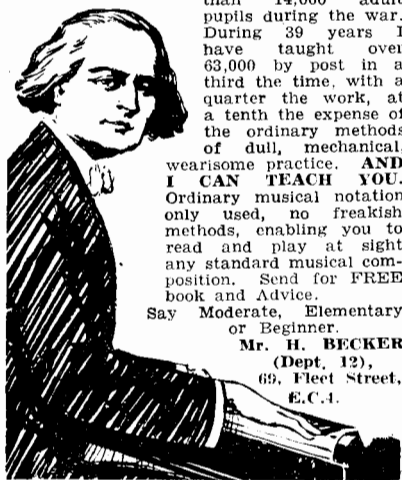
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