

VERA — AND A VITAL 12 YEARS

IT is 12.33 p.m. and in the sixth floor conference room at ACTA headquarters in Fenchurch Street Vera Palmer, tea lady extraordinary with ACTA ever since the company went into business, prepares one of her lunch-time 'specials' so that senior staff and VIP guests can continue their discussions over the mid-day break.

The story of what has happened in the 12 years since the first ACTA ship sailed to Australia — and of Vera herself — is told in a special feature by Carter Leonard on Pages 6 and 7. He also talks about the past and the future with ACTA Managing Director Alexander Macintosh.



PB now joins ACT Board

Peter Bainbridge, who has been 15 years with the ACT Group and has been ACTS Managing Director since 1976, has been appointed also to the Board of ACT Limited.

This is the company established in the mid 60's to develop long-distance container transport services, and it remains the policy-maker whose decisions directly affect the running of ACTS and other subsidiaries.

Peter Bainbridge will, of course, continue as Managing Director of ACTS.

**Think of a train
560 miles long —
then see Page 5**

DOCK

SHIPS are not the only international travellers calling at Southampton's Prince Charles Container Port. Ten hectares of reclaimed land beside 206 Berth are still undeveloped, and this area of sand, gravel and shallow pools is a popular roosting area for the wading birds which feed in the estuary at low water.

Since 1976, I and other members of the Lower Test Ringing Group have been catching and ringing roosting waders in this reclaimed land with interesting results.

Compared with other British estuaries, Southampton Water is not of very great importance for the number of wading birds it supports. But, as the ringing at the Western Docks has shown, the waders using the estuary are faithful to the area, and those wintering on Southampton Water do not move to other estuaries, except when migrating to and from their breeding grounds. For this reason the welfare of Southampton Water is vitally important to the waders which do winter there.

by

MIKE GIBBONS

The author is a shop steward at Southampton Docks, and this article first appeared in 'Docks,' employee magazine of the British Transport Docks Board. We are grateful to the Editor — and, of course, to Mike — for permission to reproduce.

It is as a wintering area that Southampton Water is of most importance for waders. During the summer only a few pairs of Oystercatchers, Ringed Plovers, Little Ringed Plovers, Redshanks and Lapwings remain to breed along the shores of the estuary.

In winter the picture is quite different with, at peak times, up to 3,000 Dunlin, 500 Curlew, 300 Oystercatchers, 400 Ringed Plover, 200 Turnstone and 200 Redshank feeding and roosting around the estuary. Less common species like Black and Bar Tailed Godwit, Grey Plover and Little Stint also winter in variable numbers.

During the Spring and Autumn migration wader species like Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Whimbrel and occasional rarities such as Kentish Plover or the North American Buff Breasted Sandpiper occur.

Exotic as some of these unusual species are, it has been the more common ones, such as the Dunlin and Ringed Plover which have provided the 'bread and butter' for our study at the Western Docks and the interesting results.

The Dunlin are divided into three races, each of which breeds in a different area. Those which winter on Southampton Water belong to the race *Alpina* which breeds from Varanger Fjord in Northern Norway eastwards to the Urals.

After breeding on the arctic tundra these Dunlin move southwards through the Baltic, stopping off to complete their moult at the Waddensee in Holland or the Wash in Norfolk, before continuing down to Southampton



An adult Dunlin caught at Southampton wearing a Finnish ring. (Picture by Hugh Insley).

Julie 'signs on' for life with Nick



Twenty-year-old Julie Webb, Telex operator at Southampton Terminal, and before that a receptionist, typist and telephonist with the company, wore a cream and mauve floral dress for her marriage at Southampton Register office to Nick Williamson foreman mechanic in a motor-cycle repair shop.

Julie, who has been with ACTS for 18 months, lists reading, cooking — and, of course, motorcycle racing — among her hobbies and outside interests.

Our picture (left) was taken while Julie and Nick were signing the register after their wedding.

RUSH DAYS AT TILBURY

The pre-Christmas sales rush was nothing compared with the pre-Christmas loading and unloading rush at Tilbury.

'Australian Venture' arrived on December 16 and, before she left two days later for Europe, more than 1,200 imports had been discharged and some 500 exports loaded.

The Venture was due back on the 22nd to complete loading, but because the Remuera Bay sailed late, work could not start again until the afternoon of the 23rd.

Thanks to T.C.S., Venture sailed for Australia, as scheduled, on Christmas Eve, after completing an exchange of more than 2,000 TEU's on both calls.

VISITORS WITH NO VISAS

Water where they spend the winter.

Dunlin have been caught in Southampton Docks, wearing rings put on in Finland, Sweden, Norway, East Germany, Holland and Denmark and there have been recoveries in most of these countries of birds ringed at Southampton.

In June, 1979, a Dunlin ringed at Southampton in March, 1978, was shot on its breeding grounds near Vortuka in Russia at 64°E. Except for one previous bird from the Wash, this is the furthest east in Russia that a Dunlin has been recovered.

By re-trapping Dunlin in subsequent winters we have found that these birds are quite faithful to Southampton Water, returning there in the third week of October each year and leaving again in April year after year.

Through docks

Dunlin of the other two races which breed in Northern Britain, Southern Scandinavia, Iceland and Greenland, also pass through the docks each Autumn and Spring on their way to and from their wintering grounds in Mauretania and West Africa.

The Ringed Plover are just as interesting with three different populations involved. A few pairs breed locally and appear to stay all year round. But each year, in May and September, a large movement occurs of Ringed Plover which breed in Greenland and winter in West Africa.

These are easily separated from the local birds and those which come from the Continent to winter here because they are almost twice as heavy, laden down with the fat which

Mother, baby and midwife all doing well. Picture by kind permission of Southern Newspapers Ltd (Southampton), who were quick to report the news of the Smith dilemma.



provides the fuel for their long flight.

Some of these live to what, for a bird, is a great age. One Ringed Plover caught in November, 1979 had been ringed as a chick in West Germany in June, 1970.

These waders are caught either at night using mist nets — fine black nylon flight nets strung between bamboos, or in the daytime using cannon nets — these are fired over the birds as they roost on the ground and catch them unharmed for ringing and measurement. The birds only come on to the reclaimed land during the hours of the high tide, the rest of their time being spent feeding on the tidal mud. Because waders are so sharp-sighted, mist netting can only be done successfully on dark moonless nights with little wind so that the nets cannot be seen.

On a dark cold night in January or February it takes a particular dedication to leave a warm fireside to catch waders over a wet muddy pool in the small hours of the morning.

If you find a ringed bird, send the ring to the British Trust for Ornithology, Tring, Herts, giving date, where found and if bird was freshly dead.

The day Pete Smith turned midwife . . .

Senior Systems Analyst Peter Smith will remember for ever the day that he became a midwife! After all, programme planning is one thing; delivering babies is a very different kettle of fish.

When his wife Sandra announced that she was going into labour in the early hours of a recent morning, Peter jumped to put the pre-arranged drill into action.

"I leaped out of bed and rushed to the telephone to tell the hospital that we would be on our way in a matter of minutes," he says. "But we both soon realised that we would never make it!"

Everything then happened so quickly that Peter had to take over — and within minutes he had successfully delivered his 5lb 13oz baby daughter.

"Frightening"

"I had a theoretical knowledge of what to do," he says, "but nothing more. It was all pretty frightening, but luckily everything was straightforward."

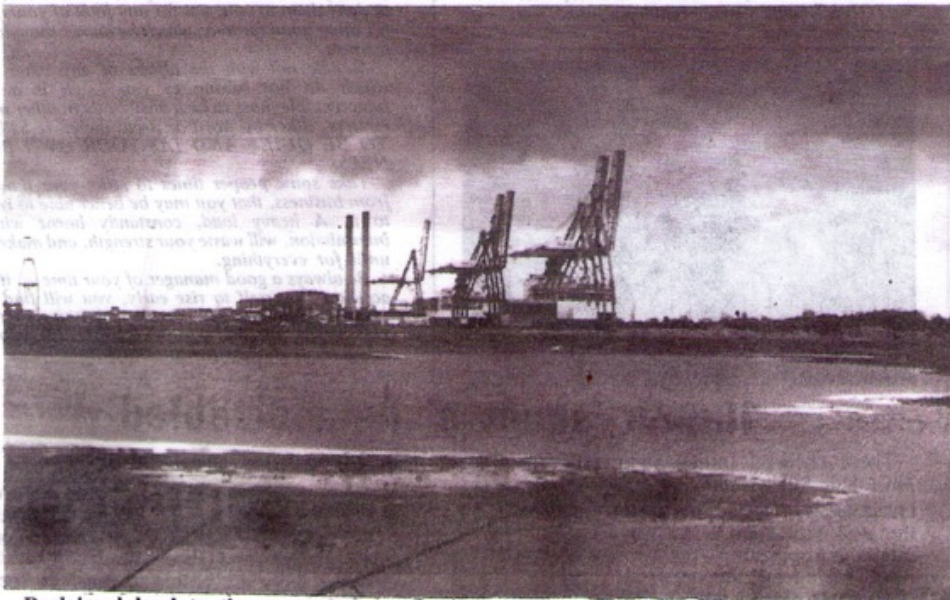
"The baby started to cry almost immediately. If she hadn't, I think I would have panicked and spoiled everything. You can imagine my relief when the ambulance arrived to take Sandra and baby to hospital."

Peter and Sandra also have a nine-year-old son.

Welcome, Paul

Welcome into this world for Paul William Bray, three-month-old son of Teresa and Steven Bray.

Steven is an Imports commercial assistant with ACTS at Liverpool, and Paul weighed in at 7lb 11oz when he was born on March 3.



Reclaimed land to the west of the present berths in the Prince Charles Container Port at Southampton. (Photo: Hugh Insley).

SO THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET HIM TO THE CHURCH ON TIME!

Norman joins Eric and the Queen

by JOCELYN REES

Stand up, please, anyone in class who can tell me what the Queen, Morecambe and Wise, Sir Harold Wilson, Florence Nightingale, the Prince of Wales, Ted Heath and Norman Cooper, ACTS Regional Manager at Basildon — to name but a few — have in common.

The answer, of course (as if you didn't already know!) is that they and quite a few others are, or were, Freemen of the City of London. (The 'others' include Winston Churchill, Prince Phillip, Pierre Trudeau, Princess Anne, Roy Jenkins, Montgomery of Alamein, Baden Powell, General Smuts, Vic (Lord) Feather, Earl Mountbatten and the Governors of the Bank of England — which only goes to show that it's not a bad 'club' to be in!)

Norman Cooper himself was admitted to the ancient and distinguished order largely because he helped to get at least two Lord Mayors of London to the Church (St Paul's, actually) on time . . .

As he explains: "Until 1971 or thereabouts, at the annual Lord Mayor's procession, the Lord Mayor himself would arrive at the Law Courts anything up to an hour late. By the time he got there, everybody had

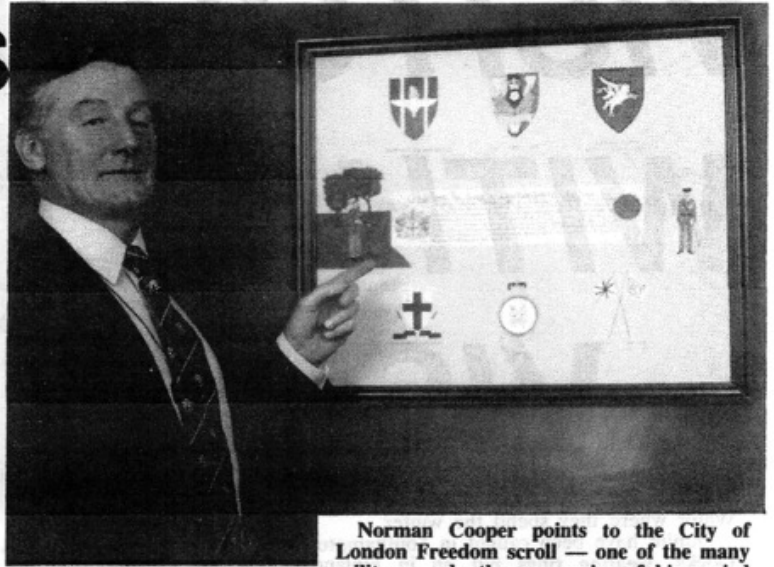
been standing around in freezing or drenching weather, the lunch was cold — and quite a few of those involved including the television people whose schedules were being thrown hopelessly out of gear, were thoroughly fed up.

"A big problem, I suspect, was that the procession always had a strong Service element, and Army, Navy and Air Force officers don't always, understandably, take kindly to orders given by civilian police.

"The then Lord Mayor decided to do something about it, and called for a contingent of officers from London units of all three Services to take over the job of getting his successor to St Paul's on schedule."

As a long-serving Territorial officer — he retired, as a major, from the Intelligence Corps in 1979 — Norman Cooper was one of the founder members of the Corps of Marshals.

The method adopted was both simple and effective. One marshalling officer (about 40 in all) was put in charge of every two or three contingents in the procession. And with Servicemen on the sidelines unobtrusively prompting (in their own language!) the Servicemen in the procession, everything worked out fine.



Norman Cooper points to the City of London Freedom scroll — one of the many military and other souvenirs of his varied career specially mounted for his office wall by Debbie Hendry, of Basildon Imports.

The original marshals were appointed on an ad hoc basis, but so effective did the scheme prove that it was later decided to form an official Corps of Marshals. When Sir Ronald Gardner Thorpe became Lord Mayor, he proposed that all in the Corps be made Freemen of the City.

So it was that 51-year-old Norman Cooper, who joined Port Line as a messenger in 1944, was 'forcibly' (he says) transferred as a salesman to ACT in 1967 and has been a stalwart of the company ever since, swore his Freeman's oath of allegiance last December to Her Majesty and the Lord Mayor.

I had always imagined (in common, I suspect, with others) that Freemen of any City had 'perks' galore. Free rides on all City transport. Free admission to any City functions. No rents. No taxes. That kind of thing. But not a bit of it.

"All that disappeared in the middle of the last century", says Norman, "though I believe there are certain advantages of education for any orphans whose fathers were Freemen, and for Freemen themselves who are in need in their old age."

FLUFFING A DRIVING TEST WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

By GAYNOR SMITH

To those who innocently took to the roads on the day in question, I apologise for the fact that I recently took my very first driving test (the first, I suspect, of many).

I confess that at the start I thought I was doing quite well, despite a miserable examiner who sat puffing and tutting beside me. He would have to admit that I did a wonderful hill start, a stupendous emergency stop — and then, without any prompting whatsoever, remembered exactly where my unmarked crossroads were!

It wasn't until I got on to the main road and approached my first major traffic island that my problems really started. I stopped like an angel, then sat and waited until all the traffic had gone past. It was at this moment I spotted (and heard!) an old banger coming round the far side of the island at about five miles an hour, with a stream of traffic waiting behind.

Like any reasonable driver, I thought to myself: 'Well, I'll get out in front of this slow-looking lot and be on my way'. What I didn't notice, of course, was that the five-miles-an-hour banger left the island at the exit before mine — and all the traffic behind it suddenly raced round to confuse me just as I was pulling out!

I braked suddenly — and so did the examiner. He didn't seem quite as prepared as me and hit his head a terrific bump on the windscreen.

A major catastrophe was heroically avoided, but at this moment I got the horrible feeling I had blown my test . . .

Except for a cat which suddenly shot across the back of the car, frightening the daylight out of me so that I braked violently enough to send the vehicle shooting straight up onto the pavement (who says black cats are lucky?), the rest of the test was just what the Minister of Transport ordered.

Back at the driving centre, the examiner merely barked something about me not reaching quite the necessary standard, dabbed a handkerchief over the lump that had appeared on his forehead — and bustled away as if looking for either a hospital or a rest centre.

Still, there's always a next time. I hope . . .

EDITOR'S NOTE: Gaynor Smith passed her test just as we went to Press.



10-pub 'squaws' help disabled

These cheerful Indian Squaws (Telex operators Kay Savage and Jenny Glasspool, from Head Office Operations Department) took to the trail with great effect when they joined 50 others in a sponsored, three-legged pub crawl to raise money for the disabled.

To complete the course, the participants had to walk — three-legged, naturally, and preferably in fancy dress — between 10 pubs in Southampton and also prove that they had at

Rules of Life

One thing every Freeman does get is a fascinating, bound copy of a booklet entitled 'Rules for the Conduct of Life'. It was originally intended, many, many years ago, for Freemen who employed apprentices — and as a guide to what the youngsters should be told.

The passing of time has certainly not dated the Rules. I particularly like the following:-

Let the end you aim at always be good . . . and, if you fall short of some things you desire in this world, you will have this comfort, that God thinks fit to deny them to you, not for any fault of yours, but for other good reasons, which he knows though you do not;

Meddle not with the affairs of any other man which do not belong to you . . . it is a very unacceptable thing to be a busy-body in other men's matters, either by word or deed: therefore STUDY TO BE QUIET AND DO YOUR OWN BUSINESS;

Take some proper times to relax your thoughts from business, that you may be better able to return to it. A heavy load, constantly borne without intermission, will waste your strength, and make you unfit for everything.

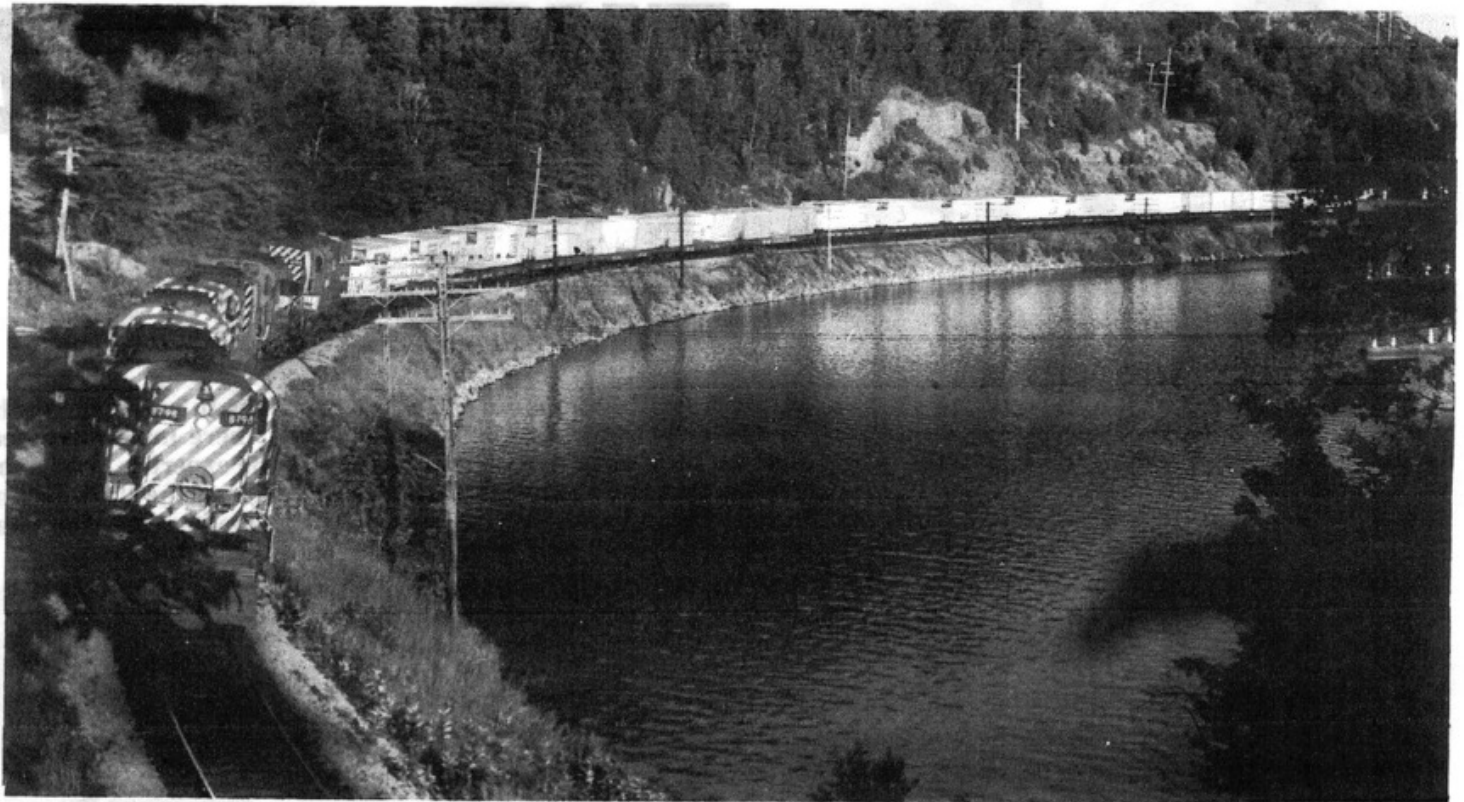
Be always a good manager of your time . . . if you accustom yourself to rise early, you will find that you have time enough to do all the business that you have to do, and much more than persons who rise late will think possible to be done.

least one drink in each of them.

Jenny and Kay did well to survive the ordeal and complete the course. Their Operations Department colleagues Graham Godwin (operations assistant) and Pete Thompson (systems controller) did even better to finish in second place.

Together the four raised a total of £110 in this Year of the Disabled.

Railroad Europe!



I imagine, if you can, a container train stretching all the way from Hamburg to Berne, in Switzerland — or Dover to Aberdeen, if you're not too strong on your Europe — and you will have some idea of the problems 44-year-old Hugh Townsend occasionally has on his mind.

For Hugh, as he sits in his Richmond House office as Traffic Manager of ACTS, is a bit of a Jekyll and Hyde. Though his main occupation is the control of container movements under ACTS auspices, 25 per cent of his time over the past four years has had to be given to his job as Chairman of the Maritime Container Rail Association. Time lost? Certainly not, because what's good for MCRA is good for ACT — as we shall see.

by **LESTER CARROLL**

The Association, set up early in 1972, today represents 14 container companies using 25 international railway companies on the Continent.

"Over there", says Hugh, "any container train crossing an international border between one country and another is the business of an organisation in Basle called Intercontainer, owned by the 25 railway companies involved.

"At one time, negotiations on terms and conditions were conducted piecemeal with them by individual container operators, but in 1972 it was decided to pool all the shipping companies' resources and to simplify negotiations with Intercontainer by having one voice to speak for all."

A great deal of the credit for negotiating the best possible charges and conditions for MCRA over the last four years undoubtedly goes to Hugh. At least four times a year, he flies off to chair meetings in Europe — some with fellow members of MCRA, others with Intercontainer and once a year with all together.

You may be excused for wondering how he gets on. "The Commercial Manager of Intercontainer is German, and his two Trade Managers are both Dutch", says Hugh. "His Operational Manager is French — and there are all sorts of nationalities among the rest of the railway companies' representatives. So far as the MCRA is concerned, we have Norwegian, Swedish, German, Dutch, French, Italian, Japanese and English speaking members."

So what language do they use when they meet?

IMAGINE A CONTAINER TRAIN 560 MILES LONG ...

English. Of course. "The Chairman can't speak any other", says Hugh.

The official constitution stating the aims of the Maritime Container Rail Association makes it quite clear that it was set up to benefit both parties involved in the 'terms and conditions' negotiations. On the one hand, it 'aims to obtain the best possible rates and conditions for Member Lines' rail transport'. On the

The long, long trail awinding — a container train on the move, with ACT well represented!

Picture by kind permission of Containerisation International.

other, it is intended 'to promote the development of rail container services in Europe in General, and international rail traffic in particular, to the mutual benefit of Member Lines and Intercontainer/Interfrigo'.

If you try to get an idea of the total track mileage owned by the 25 Continental railway companies involved you will, I can assure you, get everybody completely bogged down! But Hugh Townsend, as chairman of the operators' association, will produce figures showing that very nearly THREE MILLION FEET — or 560 miles — of containers were carried across Europe by MCRA members in the last recorded 12-month period.

"That means", he says, "that if all the containers carried for MCRA in a year were laid end-to-end, they would stretch from Hamburg to Berne. And the total bill for their carriage amounts to something like FOURTEEN MILLION POUNDS."

Please turn to Page 9.

Paul Howlett decides to become a 'copper'



Gill Creed

GILL TAKES OVER THE SOTON SPORTS 'CHAIR'

Gill Creed, Stock Controller (Camel) in the Operations Department at Head Office, is the new Chairman of Southampton ACTS Sports and Social Club. She takes over from Paul Howlett, Budget Assistant in Management Accounts, who has decided that a policeman's lot is likely to be a happy one for him.

After 3½ years with the company, Paul has left to join the Wiltshire Constabulary as a probationary constable.

For some years Gill has devoted a great deal of her spare time to the development of the Soton Sports and Social Club, and has been an enthusiastic (and often successful) member of the Head Office team in the Peter Yarwood Cup competition.

Everyone at Southampton — and throughout the regions — will wish Paul success in his new career and Gill success in her new post.



Paul Howlett



Ambassador Chris

On the switchboard and at the reception desk, Christine Phelps has been an 'ambassador' for ACTA for many years. When she first joined the company — in 1967, in Camomile Street — her switchboard had four outside lines with 18 extensions, only ten of which were normally in use.

Her switchboard to-day in Fenchurch Street has 20 outside lines, with 100 extensions contributing to an annual telephone bill that carves a hefty slice out of the company's total of £45,000-a-year spent on communications alone.

Christine, married five years, took time out from ACTA in 1973, when she went with friends to work in Australia.

Keeping-up the PACE — and those hamburgers!

In America to-day you'd be 'wildly unlucky' to be offered a hamburger that didn't have Australian or New Zealand beef inside, according to Tony Foreman (pictured right), PACE trade manager since 1975.

Beef is, of course, the staple Northbound cargo to America, and of the total of one BILLION dollars' worth carried each year, a third of it, in 10,000 refrigerated containers, travels PACE.

Tony joined ACTA in 1967 as a computer analyst, after University and three years at sea with Ellerman.

12 YEARS OF THE ACTA BABY GREY

WHEN ACT announced in 1967 their plans to containerise the sea routes between Europe and Australia, there must have been few who doubted their ability to succeed. After all, the expertise, vast experience and obvious success in conventional shipping areas of the three partners — Star, Ellerman and Port Line — offered almost a cast-iron guarantee that neither Hell nor high water would hold them back.

But few of those involved in the original feasibility studies or who travelled relentlessly round Britain in the late 60's selling the new container concept to shippers with minds still running on

By
CARTER LEONARD

more conventional lines would, I suspect, have been prepared to bet heavily on the worldwide extent of the ACTA operation to-day — little more than 12 years after the first containership sailed East.

Alexander Macintosh, now ACTA Managing Director, and then, fresh from Unilever, the company's newly-appointed Commercial Manager, was himself one of the handful of pioneers. Looking back, he says: "The period between 1967 and 1969, before we had taken delivery of the original three ships ordered, was one of intense development, at the end of which we had basically attained our first objectives.

"But look at what has been achieved



"The rank and file are the business — simple as that," says ACTA Managing Director Alexander Macintosh, one of the company's pioneering team.

in addition since then, particularly the opening up, with our partners, of the PACE service between Australia, New Zealand and the East coasts of America and Canada, and of the service between Australia and the West coast of America.

"Certainly we had from the start a glint in our eyes beyond Australia and Europe, but in those early days it was nothing more."

Those early days . . . It is hard to believe that ACT, with its network of office services to-day spread wide across Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and America, and now one of the largest refrigerated container operators in the world, had at that time a staff of just 15 working in a few square yards of space in the Ellerman building in Cannon Street.

One of the eleven was Roy Davis, was a SAS man, local government stalwart (h



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Mayor of Crawley a few years ago), tennis fanatic, bridge fiend and, as ACTA's General Manager, Marketing, a man who played a key role in the company's first decade of development.

He talks with authority and nostalgia of ACTA's growth — of the first ships ordered, and of their coming gradually on stream during development of the original service to Australia; of the pioneering work which subsequently opened up a container service to New Zealand's Northern and Southern islands; and of the revolutionary development work which, over the years, has piled up an impressive list of 'firsts' in the reefer field.

Thanks to the development by ACTS of more sophisticated techniques in the design and manufacture of general cargo and refrigerated containers and bulk tanks, ACTA has led the way in container refrigeration to such an extent that it is now possible to carry types of perishable goods which ten years ago could not have been expected to arrive in good condition.

Only recently, for instance, ACTA won one of Australia's most prestigious awards, the S. E. Pike Memorial Trophy, for pioneer work in the transportation to Europe of, believe it or not — ONIONS! Putting things in perspective, the citation says that ACTA, by this experiment, 'played an important role in the development of transporting bulk vegetables in refrigerated containers.'

Working Party

But it was not always like that. Not always a story of successes and awards. There was a time when nobody could be sure that there was really a rosy future for containerisation. Early in 1966, therefore, the five founder lines — Ben, Blue Star, Ellerman, Cunard and Harrison — set up a working party (one member from each line) to research the viability of a container service to Australia.

The members of that working party had little practical container experience of their own upon which to rely, and many of the problems must at that time have looked daunting, if not insurmountable. If the idea was to become a commercial reality, how many ships would be needed — and of what size and type? What speed would be required, and how frequent would the service have to be? Which were the right ports to choose? And how long would it take to convert enough exporting minds from 'conventional' to 'containerised' to make a service profitable?

If ever the members of that working party look back to-day upon those 14 months of intense research, preparation and 'trial runs', I suspect they must occasionally wonder that so many of the reports circulating between them and the Member Lines have since proved so uncannily accurate.

Early birds

By March, 1967, the decision had been made to go ahead with an Australian service — and within a matter of months, some of those now in high places at ACTA's Fenchurch Street headquarters had been engaged to nurse the baby thus conceived through its birth, teething troubles and formative years.

Michael Cartwright, to-day ACTA's Director of Commercial Planning, was an early arrival, in 1967, as

A DAY FOR CELEBRATION — and talks about the future. This picture was taken when Concargo's Chairman, David Knightley, handed over the record-breaking 5,000th insulated container manufactured by his company for ACTA. Mr Knightley is fourth from the left, between Alastair Lloyd, then Chairman of ACTS and Deputy Chairman of Ellerman City Liners, and John Ormiston, ACTS Technical Director, whose team has been closely involved in the development of refrigerated containers for the ACTA fleet. Also in the picture are Richard Clarke (second from left) Australian National Line representative in the U.K. and Europe, Concargo Managing Director Stan Ayres, fourth from right, and ACTA Managing Director Alexander Macintosh, third from right.

a systems analyst, and apart from a spell during which he was seconded to ACTUSA to help set up their EDP department, has been there ever since.

Tony Foreman now Trade Manager of the successful PACE operation, was another 1967 recruit, also as a systems analyst, joining from ICT (now ICL), and so was the redoubtable Len Fiddock, who came from Blue Star as Assistant Commercial Manager and to-day, as General Manager, heads the trade team looking after traffic between Europe and Australia/New Zealand.

It was in August of the next year that the then Chief Officer Peter Pike gave up a career at sea with Ellerman to become ACT's Assistant Terminal Traffic Controller at Tilbury. Now he is the company's Operations Director.

Four months after Peter Pike's arrival, Richard Bills joined the Roy Davis marketing team as a salesman in the London area, becoming London Sales Manager the following year and then Assistant Marketing Manager (Northbound).

And it was two-and-a-half years later that Ian Weatherston gave up his job as Chief Accountant to the Agricultural Division of Rank Hovis McDougall to become Financial Controller of ACTA. Three years later he joined the Board as Financial Director.

But of all those who have been involved from the start, few, I suspect, could claim to be better-known or more affectionately regarded than the lady who has looked after their inner comforts for almost fourteen years. Tea lady Vera Palmer — who says, quite unashamedly, 'I love 'em all — though I think most young newcomers are a bit afraid of me at first' — was trotting round with her teas and coffees in the very early Camomile Street days.



Yvonne Lutley 'joined as a temp but somehow managed to stay'

She moved, along with her clientele, when the company expanded into Fenchurch Avenue, and she's still with them at their multi-storied Fenchurch Street office block, where to-day they are between 80 and 90 strong. And to-day, Vera and her helpers serve not only their teas and coffees, but if senior management wish to entertain customers, Press or other VIPs, Vera is ever-ready to trot out her silverware and dish up a

meal that would do credit to any caterer. Some weeks ago she was taken ill and to hospital, and in the weeks of her absence was sorely missed by all!

Vera herself is four times a grandmother, and it is a fact that for the past four years she has exchanged Valentine cards annually with no less a person than the Deputy Managing Director of ACT in Australia — Christopher Cullen, once one of her 'young gentlemen' in Fenchurch Street — speaks volumes for the company's 'happy family' atmosphere.

It also says plenty for a company when children especially in package lots, follow their parents into the business. Yvonne Lutley, who has been with ACT since January, 1969 — "I joined just as a 'temp', but somehow managed to stay" — has five children and four of them have worked for ACTA at one time or another. Her eldest son, Jeremy, was 'in computer' for five years with ACTS at Southampton.

Yvonne herself is secretary to Roy Davis. She was once in the Blue Star table tennis team — but had!

(continued on Page 11)



MARKETING the service ACTA offers has been Roy Davis' job ever since the company first got up in business.

THE

Carter Leonard

COLUMN

TWO PAGES

Congratulations to ACTA's personnel officer, Sandie Tucker, on the first issue of 'Distractions' — a newcomer to the ever-growing list of company newsheets.

Like the six-year-old 'Contacts', Sandie's journal is packed with news about company employees — in Fenchurch Street and around the country — and contains puzzles aplenty to set minds working.

I particularly enjoyed pitting my wits (if any) against those who compiled quizzes aimed at sports and television enthusiasts. I wonder how many readers would have been able to answer, without delving into records, the following questions (answers at the foot of column one, on opposite page):-

WHO, at the age of 45 and 25 years after this first appearance in a Test Match, was recalled to the England cricket side against the West Indies in 1976?

THREE SEEDED PLAYERS were eliminated in the first round of the Men's Singles at Wimbledon in 1978 — Dick Stockton, John McEnroe and a former champion. Who was he?

WHO played The Girl from Uncle?

WHAT drink would you expect to buy for Ena Sharples in the Rovers?

I was intrigued also (as which discerning male wouldn't be?) by DistrACTION's reference on its back page to a girl called Maria Allegri. I gather that Maria is not only a young lady at whom any chap in his right mind would want to look more than twice, but is also, as ACTA's Central Service Admin. Supervisor, 'the one to see if you have a breakdown — mechanical or otherwise'.

I just couldn't resist the impulse to send my cameraman to make a personal check

Sandie herself, of course, is no mean cookie, though I was not able to get a picture. She joined ACTA two-and-a-half years ago after working in Personnel for the Borough Council of Wandsworth, where — among many other duties — she organised show-jumping events, veteran car rallies and celebratory street parties.

GETTING HIS OATS — FOR CHARITY

Avid readers of 'Contacts' — and who isn't? — will remember that in the last issue we posed a pretty pertinent question about Scotsmen. NOT the one about what he wears under his kilt (and I still don't know), but the equally pertinent one about what he does with his oats in the Summer. His porridge oats, of course.

I am happy, with the help of the pictures at the top of the opposite page, to provide the answer. It shows that stalwart of Scotland John Gray, Assistant Cargo Superintendent at Coatbridge, taking a plateful of porridge right in the kisser .. all in the cause of sweet charity, of course.

I suspect John is not telling the entire truth when he says: "There was a surplus of porridge last Summer, due to the mild winter, and the organisers of the Bearsden and Milngavie Highland Games — a bit like a garden fete in England — got the bright idea of dressing me up as J. R. Ewing, and letting housewives vent their rage against him by hurling plates of cold porridge at me!

"I don't know what J.R. and Sue Ellen would have thought, but I do know that I derived one benefit — my complexion was like a baby's bottom by the end. I don't think I'll be able to look a plate of porridge in the face again, however."

At least, he had the satisfaction of knowing that his temporary disfigurement resulted in £85 being handed over to a good cause.

THE DEEPER MEANING!

An inveterate reader of other 'house journals', I was intrigued by the following in a recent issue of 'Ellerman News', the inhouse magazine of that group in South Africa. It would appear that somebody had been asked to give The Deeper Meaning of Ellerman — and the following was the result:-

- E — is for Ellermans from whom we receive our daily bread. Like most companies, we have our own unique characteristics and sacred cows. Some of these are exposed here.
- L — is for Long Service for which we receive an award. In most branches the qualifying period is 20 years but Johannesburg has had dispensation to make it 20 months. To date no one in that Branch has qualified.

The Girl From ACTA

Former receptionist with a rent-a-car company, Maria Allegri (referred to by Carter Leonard in his lead story) has been six years with ACTA.

Though both her parents are Italian and she has a sister living in Rome, Maria herself was born in England.

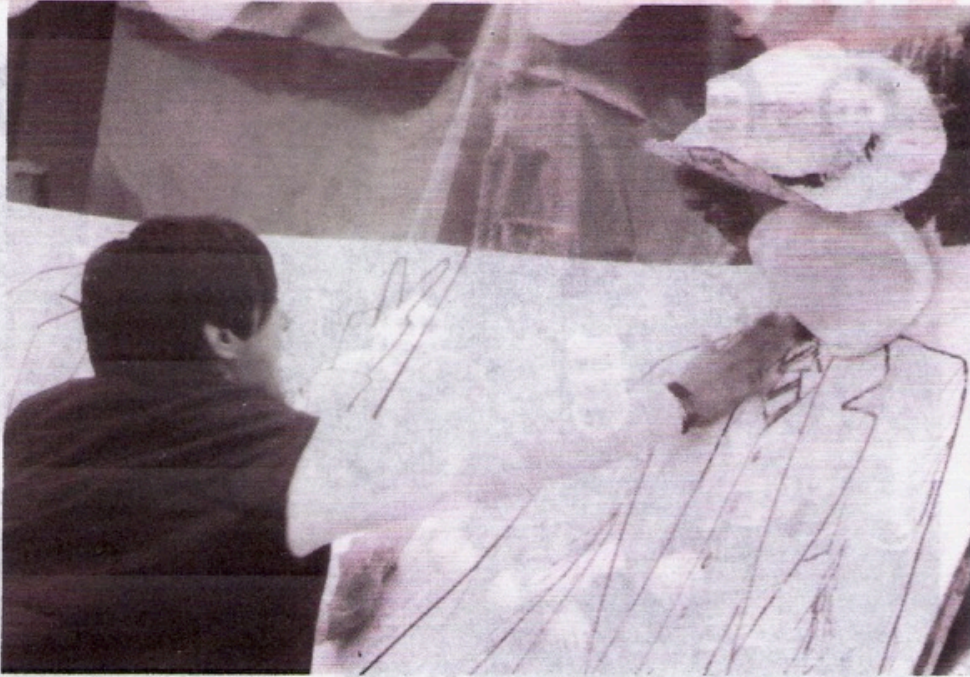


- L — is also for Liner Services Managers of which there is one in every Branch. At least there should be, but some insist on calling themselves all sorts of strange names like Meld and Sam.
- E — is for Executives who are thick on the ground, especially in Head Office. According to some, they're pretty thick wherever they are.
- R — is for Regional Offices of which we have five. These are run by Regional Managers, except for East London which is run by a Manager and is actually not really a Branch but a department of Port Elizabeth (W.T.M.B.)
- M — is for Management Courses run by our Group

Personnel Manager. We all enjoy attending these courses because we get a free ball pen at the end.

- A — is for Appraisal and Counselling sessions which enable Managers to get their subordinates, in one hour, what they should have been telling them throughout the year.
- N — is for News disseminated in this magazine. Some unkind people believe the news content is superseded by the amount of drivel, but the Editor reserves the right not to publish such complaints.
- S — is for ships and salesmen. Without the former

TO PUZZLE AND AMUSE



there would be nowhere to carry cargo and without the latter no cargo anyway. We thank them for providing the aforesaid bread that we receive daily from Ellermans.

You would imagine that any chap who had a plate of porridge thrown in his face would feel pretty peeved. Especially when it happened over and over again for most of an afternoon. But not so that Coatbridge hero John Gray, as the picture on the right shows. See: Getting His Oats — for charity, on opposite page.

THOSE FAMOUS EYES

Though offering no prizes for correct solutions, I did promise to give readers, in my next column, the correct answer to the 'Eyes of the Famous' competition published last time. So here it is, with (in brackets) the 'clues' given:-

- 1) Brian Murphy ('you could call George one of the spuds');
- 2) Katie Boyle ('Quite Contrarily, this Katie sounds as if she has the kettle on');
- 3) Terry Wogan ('liable to make your mind go Blankety Blank');
- 4) Gayle Hunnicutt ('she sounds quite like a gale force');
- 5) Felicity Kendall ('maybe the Good Life suits her');
- 6) Ed Stewart ('A stewpot for the housewives now');
- 7) Pete Murray ('His house was always Open');
- and 8) Anita Harris ('you could call her quite a tweddy singer. SORRY!')

Incidentally, congratulations to one of our 'eyes' girls, Felicity Kendall, who, just as we went to Press, won a Pye TV Award as Britain's 1981 Funny Girl for her performances in "Solo," the comedy series written by Carla Lane.

Home Truths

There should be music in every house — except the one next door. When people aren't sure of what they want in a democracy, they simply vote for something different from what they have The man who doesn't believe that women are bad losers never knew one who was trying to reduce. A small town is one where there is no place to go that you shouldn't.

A few gems from 'The Speaker's Handbook of Epigrams and Witticisms' (Herbert Prochnow)

How did you do

Hoping that you did not cheat and take a sneak preview, I now give you the correct answers to the four questions posed by Sandy Tucker in her ACTA house journal quiz (see my lead story).

The man who came back to test cricket was ex-Yorkshire and Somerset skipper Brian Close. The third men's seed to be knocked out in the first round at Wimbledon in 1978 was Arthur Ashe.

The girl from Uncle was none other than Stephanie Power, who now appears as Jennifer Hart in the 'Hart to Hart' television series, and Ena Sharples' favourite drink is (or was) milk stout. Hope you did better than I did . . .

Crossword Corner

Ralph Scofield, a Transport Assistant at Grays, won first prize of £3 in the crossword competition published in the last issue of 'Contacts'. His correct solution was the first opened. Second came from Susan Tiller, a Commercial Assistant at Basildon to whom we are sending a cheque for £2.

We were delighted to have a record number of entries, and for those who want to check the answers, here they are:— ACROSS 1 Peter Bainbridge; 7 Load up; 8 Campbell; 10 Stand off; 11 Ides; 14 Inga; 15 Cove; 16 Tiler; 19 Garth; 20 Duke; 21 Anti; 23 Tows; 24 Snapshot; 26 Hamilton; 27 Vision; 28 North Sea Feeders. DOWN 2 Trafalgar; 3 Rounds; 4 Near; 5 Rapidity; 6 Diets; 7 Lashings; 9 Affords; 12 Jenkins; 13 Ormiston; 17 Lunchtime; 18 The Welsh; 22 Splice; 23 Timer; 25 Hope.

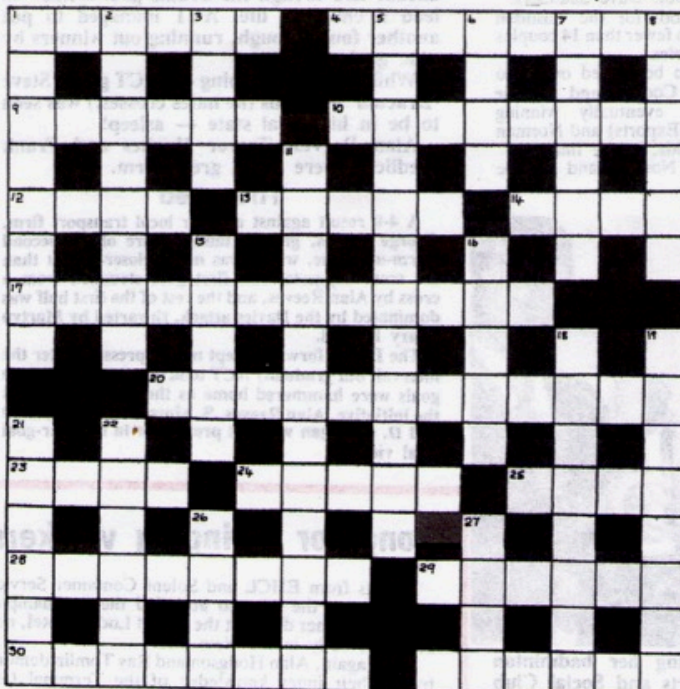
Because so many of you obviously enjoyed pitting your wits against John Brooks, Management Accountant at Head Office, we invited him to prepare another crossword for you. Here it is — and the prizes are the same. Three pounds for the first correct solution opened, two pounds for the second.

Your entries must reach Lynne Lisney, Personnel Department, Head Office, by Monday, June 1, 1981. Here are the clues, so over to you . . .

ACROSS

1. Albert's son who was conquered? (6)
4. Young Abraham circulated strange tense? Not here! (8)
9. High-flying engine? (6)
10. Liverpool-Glasgow waterproof service? (8)

12. ACTA get loads of this from NZ. (4).
13. Applicable to port and owls? (5)
14. Reverse sleep to get across? (4)
17. Grouped? Packed? Stuffed? Got together? (12)
20. They make sure that restows are minimised (we hope!) (4-8)
23. Baldy feels this. A cockney might say the opposite! (4).



24. Rocks which can be seen by BLC from their Head Office? (5)
25. Mine. (2,2)
28. Do you ken the dogged Regional Manager? (8)
29. Ruined drapes were saved? (6)
30. Totally devoid of compassion. (8)
31. Strangely reachy day beginner? Bent over. (6)

DOWN

1. Tough? (4,4)
2. Thames town becomes Southampton house? (8)
3. Tenant becomes officer with this in place. (4)
5. Pulling intelligence? (5,7)
6. Aden is strange place for this girl. (4)
7. Company of acting soldiers? (6)
8. Stretch. (6)
11. Dad sprains 50? He manages terminations! (5,7)
15. Scottish one-roomed hut. (5)
16. D before 1971? (5)
18. Port you can observe after three? Sounds like it! (8)
19. Descend a strange way? Went the opposite way? (6)
21. Mad capital coverer? (6)
22. What wet alcoholics have to do! (3,3)
26. Shop a lot inside for a gem? (4)
27. Tottenham player? (4)

SPORTNEWS reports what's happening

Basildon men make a clean sweep...

With new perpetual trophies offered for the first time, and draughts added to the usual pool, darts and table tennis, there was an increased entry for Basildon's Christmas sports tournament.

Competition was fierce, and though the menfolk made a clean sweep of the trophies, there were some very creditable performances by the ladies.

Our picture shows Regional Manager Norman Cooper (right) presenting the table tennis trophy to Mr J. E. Skuse. In the centre is Lorraine Bell, who coped splendidly with the thankless tasks of organising the draw and ensuring that events were played on time!



Other winners were:- Draughts, M. D. Street; Darts, Mike Mackay; and Pool, Dave Saunders.

There was a big entry, too, for the Basildon badminton tournament with no fewer than 14 couples competing in the mixed doubles.

Preliminary matches had to be played over two lunch-times, with Norman Cooper and Debbie Wilkins (Central Services) eventually winning through to meet Martin Fry (Exports) and Norman Cooper's secretary, Sue Shields, in the final.

In a close-fought contest, Norman and Debbie came out winners by 2-1.



Debbie Wilkins receiving her badminton prize from Basildon Sports and Social Club chairman John Wilson.



IN WINNING FORM:- Ten of the Liverpool ACTS team. Standing (left to right): T. Hughes, N. Robertson, D. O'Hagan, S. Williams, F. Medicott, L. Isaacs and A. Reeves. Kneeling (left to right): P. Hirons, S. Moreland and T. Medicott.

13 GOALS CLINCH TWO GREAT 'POOL WINS

Liverpool ACTS footballers scored a couple of resounding victories during their warm-up campaign in preparation for the annual 'derby' encounter with Manchester ACT.

Their long-awaited return match with Brains was not only played in atrocious conditions, but ACT had to lend a player to the opposition, who turned up one short!

No fewer than 10 goals came in the first half, at the end of which the scores were even.

The second forty-five minutes saw ACT leap ahead, and though the Brains goal seemed to lead a charmed life, ACT managed to put another four through, running out winners by nine goals to five.

While all this was going on, ACT goalie Steve 'Dracula' Williams (he hates crosses!) was seen to be in his usual state — asleep!

Alan Reeves, Trevor Hughes and Frank Medicott were all in great form.

Thwarted

A 4-0 result against another local transport firm, George Davies, gives a false picture of the second warm-up game, which was much closer-fought than the score suggests. The first goal stemmed from a cross by Alan Reeves, and the rest of the first half was dominated by the Davies attack, thwarted by Martyn Neary in goal.

The Davies forwards kept up the pressure after the interval, but gradually ACT took over and three more goals were hammered home as the Davies team lost the initiative. Alan Reeves, S. Moreland, F. Medicott and D. O'Hagan were all prominent in the four-goal final victory.



Happiness pair

A couple with every reason to look happy and pleased with themselves — Norman Horngold, of ACTS Tilbury, and his wife Debra.

This picture was taken just after they had announced the great news that they are expecting their first child in July.

Song for swinging workers

Guests from EHCL and Solent Container Services were among the 80 who attended the Southampton Terminal dinner dance at the Forest Lodge Hotel, near Romsey, early in the New Year.

Once again, Alan Hodgson and Ray Tomlin demonstrated their inner knowledge of the Terminal (and those who work there!) in a song specially written for the occasion.

wherever the action may be

ACTA — FIRST 12 YEARS

(continued from page 7)

give the game up 'because it clashed with my Dutch lessons'.

If ACTA, in its first twelve operational years, happily hit its inaugural targets and on the way scored bulls on quite a few others, like PACE and PAD, what are the prospects for the future? Can the container concept, as represented by ACTA, not only weather the current storm of world depression, but be ready vigorously to strike ahead when times improve?

Alexander Macintosh has no doubts. "I believe we are in for a period of continuing and intensified competition," he says. "It will be a more difficult world for the traditional liner shipping operator, but one in which I believe we can do well."

"As a company, we are neither too big nor too cumbersome. We are aware of the changes going on around us — and have proved that we know how to cope with them."

"We have managed to be independent and to demonstrate that we know what we are talking about. This is going to stand us in good stead in the years ahead."

A major consideration, of course, must be the ships themselves. How long will they last? And with what kind of ships will the originals be replaced when their useful life is over?



Geoff Beckett

Joined ACTA two years ago, took over as company secretary when Eric Sutton retired.

The original life expectancy was 15 years — but up to 12 of those have already passed and there's a good deal more life in the old ladies yet. ACTA has just spent something like £650,000 per ship to make them more fuel efficient, and you don't lay out that kind of money just to keep an old girl on her feet!

There is no tempting ACTA's chief executive on the design of future ships, but there is a look in his eye when he says: "You really can't be sure, can you? Thank God we don't have to worry quite as early as we originally thought!"

There's one thing, however, about which Alexander Macintosh is prepared to be quite explicit. The part the right kind of people play in the right kind of company.

"Don't ask me how important the rank and file are to a business," he says. "They are the business: it's as simple as that."

And one would do well to recall what he said some years ago at a New York shipping conference when asked to speak about making container operations pay.

"It comes down to people," he told his audience. "Experience helps. Knowing a few answers helps, too. But our business is still a new business, with a lot to be learned. There are many advances to be made which will be made only by wideawake, enthusiastic people in organisations which encourage freedom of thought and approach."

"In a nutshell, I believe that making a container operation pay can be achieved only by having the right people."

It's my hunch I know the people he was talking about.

RAILROAD EUROPE

(continued from page 5)

Bringing those figures a little nearer home, ACT — fifth in the MCRA league table of container carriers by rail — could alone have made up a train 34 miles long, and paid a 12-month bill of nearly £750,000.

Operations on the Continent differ considerably in one respect from those in this country. "In Britain clients do not have their own private sidings to which FCL containers can be delivered direct", says Hugh, "and final delivery in all cases has to be by road. On the Continent, however, quite a number of customers, particularly in France and Germany, have their own them by rail."

Like many of his ACTS colleagues, Hugh Townsend has a Merchant Navy background. He went to sea when he left school, finishing as a Chief Officer with Ellerman. He joined ACT in 1970 as an assistant cargo superintendent, but like others, never took up the job. Because of troubles at Tilbury, he was sent to join the Antwerp terminal staff. Once the long dispute was over, he had a short spell at Tilbury before being seconded to the European Joint Organisation (now ANZECS). He rejoined ACTS in 1973, and became Traffic Manager in 1978.



VICTORY FIVE from ACT, displaying the trophy they retained for a second year in the final of the Canadian Pacific Five-a-Side competition. Below, right: The trophy is received officially by Norman Hornigold.

KEVIN AND CO RALLY LATE TO KEEP TROPHY

As holders of the very first Canadian Pacific 5-a-Side Trophy, ACT returned to Billerica Sports Centre determined to hold on to the honour for a second term.

Despite early disappointments and poor performances, including two draws in the group games — 1-1 against TCS and 0-0 against C.P., Tilbury — they rallied to beat a Customs team 2-0 and so reach the semi-finals.

At this stage, the team ran into top gear, sweeping aside C.P., London, in a 5-1 victory which qualified them for a final tussle against Tilbury Container Services.

In this fiercely-fought encounter, ACT came out with a 3-2 win.

The ACT teams were chosen from: Kevin Hymas and Norman Hornigold (Tilbury), Paul O'Doherty and Frank Macklin (Grays), former employee Peter Meredith and local dockworker Garry Collins.



Helen (plus 90 pies and chips) beat OCL

It is hard to say whether a liberal supply of liquid refreshment and 90 portions of pie and chips (the local 'chippie' went on overtime) or a last-minute winning dart thrown by ACTS girl Helen Byrne played the bigger part in ensuring the success of a recent indoor games tournament between Birmingham ACTS and OCL.

The challenge had been thrown out by ACTS more as an excuse for an inter-company 'knees-up' than as a serious trial of strength, but both Helen and Brenda Bott (recovering, she said, from a birthday hangover) were in great form in a tournament that included darts, crib, table tennis and dominoes.

It was a neck-and-neck affair until the pair pulled victory out of the bag in the darts doubles.

ACTS have promised to return OCL's hospitality in the near future.

TERMINAL GET BACK INTO WINNING FORM

Plagued by injuries and illness in the early part of the season, the turn of the year brought a change of fortune to Southampton Terminal football team.

A settled side and an overall improvement in the standard of play resulted in many notable victories, one of the most convincing being a 7-2 win over a very good Tatchbury eleven. The boys in blue

played a devastating game, with great performances by Tom Jenkins (in goal), Lorne Beesley and Martin Eardley (in defence) and three-goal hero Mark Stumbles.

Another fine win was that by 3-2 over Drapers Tools — a hard-fought victory in a sea of mud.

All prospective opponents beware!

6-LANGUAGE GIRL MARRIES HER RIDING MASTER!

When Stanislawa Nunweiler, daughter of a Polish father and Spanish mother, took her powerful 750cc Triumph Bonneville motor-cycle and enlisted for a course at Barking under the RAC/ACU training scheme, she could not have foreseen that she would be married two years later to her instructor.

But that's precisely what happened. The man involved was 30-year-old Peter Tapson, senior commercial assistant at Barking, a road safety fanatic and an RAC/ACU instructor in his spare time.

Our picture was taken when they were married at St Antony's, Forest Gate, where West Ham F.C. supporter Peter even had his buttonhole carnations dyed claret and blue to demonstrate his devotion.

Of Stanislawa (Stas for short), he says: "She speaks six languages, including bad, and at 5' 2" she still has to stand on the seat of her big Triumph and jump in the air to get it started!"



REST OF THE BARKING NEWS

At the court of good Queen Bess

FULL marks to Transport Superintendent Ted Parker for his part in turning back the clock 300 years on behalf of members of Barking ACTS Sports and Social Club and their friends.

During an Elizabethan evening in the Old Palace at Hatfield, Queen Bess and her page boy, a court jester, a knight on horseback, several comely serving wenches, musical entertainers, mead and wine by the jugful and even a dragon all helped to 'beam' the guests back into the sixteenth century. And all in the magnificent room where Elizabeth I held her first Council of State.

General verdict — thoroughly repeatable ...

Congratulations to 27-year-old Telex operator Sue Jackson on the birth of her lovely (proof below right) daughter Kelly Anne. Kelly weighed 7lb 6oz. Her mother joined ACTS in January, 1974.

Top Sports People

Mr. Alastair Lloyd, of Ellerman Line, and ACTS Managing Director Peter Bainbridge were among the many guests at the annual Barking ACTS dinner dance.

Trophies won in sports competitions were presented to the following — Shelley Dowle (ladies' table tennis); Barry Griffin (men's table tennis); Martin Donnelly (chess); John Hornett (darts).

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

Barking's Diane Ashworth went to her wedding at Langtons Register Office, Hornchurch, without knowing where she would spend her honeymoon.

Bridegroom John Fitzgerald, a bank official, kept the destination secret — and handed over plane and hotel reservations to Diane at the end of the reception! They flew off the next day ...

Di Rolph now looks out instead of in, having transferred from Imports to Exports.



Diane and John



Kelly Anne Jackson

Never a dull moment for Bridget

Life could never be dull for Bridget Head, a newcomer to Transport Costing at Southampton Terminal.



Member of a local sailing club and church at her home in Hythe, she lists 'gardening and family' as her hobbies and occasional badminton, swimming and hiking as her athletic pursuits.

She's also the mother of three teen-agers — Andrew (18), Jacqueline (16) and Jonathan (13).

Date for August

Congratulations from all at Birmingham office go to Lynne Walsh (Commercial Assistant, Bookings) and husband Chris, expecting their first baby in August.