

# NEW

# CONTACTS

The House Journal of  
ASSOCIATED CONTAINER  
TRANSPORTATION  
SERVICES LTD

APRIL 1984

## Ships of the Lines - No 1

# THE MARY



### TWO ON THE MOVE

Martin Hubbard, formerly of Grays Depot, has been appointed to Stock Controller (EHCL) within HO Container Control Section. He took up his new appointment on 26th March and is hopeful of moving into his new home soon with wife Sandie and their two daughters.

While Graham Godwin, until recently Traffic Clerk (Schedules) in Operations at Head Office, has started his new job as Terminal Controller at Tilbury. He and his wife Sue and daughter Marie intend moving to the South East shortly.

When the liner Queen Mary went into well-earned 'retirement' as the centrepiece of a leisure centre at Long Beach, California, one of her most distinguished masters, Captain Treasure Jones, was on the bridge for her final journey. And Dudley Kirk, now ACTS office manager at Richmond House, was there with his camera — like thousands of others — to see her off from Southampton. This is Dudley's picture. The story of Captain Treasure Jones and The Mary starts on Page 4 — first in a new series, 'Ships of The Lines'.

## Boots made for charity walking



THREE PAIRS OF BOOTS — all made for walking, and none of them belonging to Nancy Sinatra. In fact they were worn by three members of ACTS Head Office staff on a Very Special Occasion last October. Read all about it — and put faces to the feet! — on Page 3.

## ALSO INSIDE

*Mombasa, here I come — Page 2*

**The ACTS way ahead — Page 3**

**BILL HALL** captain during and after World War 2 in the Royal Indian Army Service Corps and now Operations Assistant in Richmond House Operations department, is a man of many adventures. He recalls a few of them here in an article written specially for 'New Contacts'.

On a cold February day some years ago, having retired to bed with 'flu, I received a cable from my future employers (I was to become a shipping agent in Mombasa), telling me to cancel my sea passage and fly out. The headline on this page was my frantic reply. I just hoped they would understand. . . .

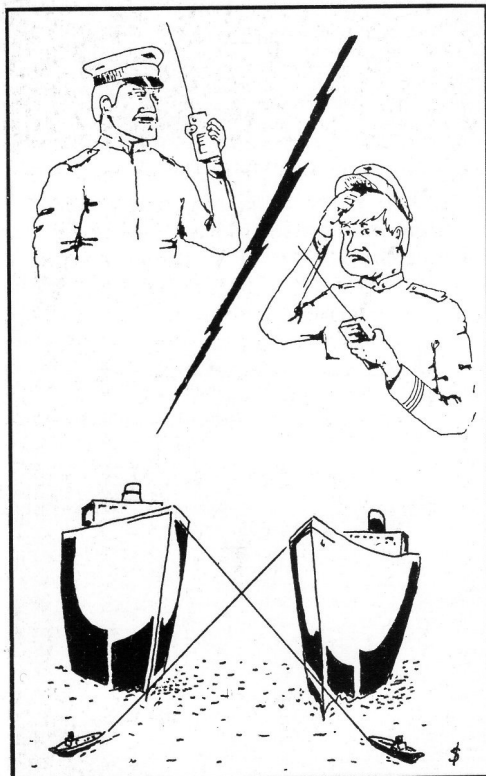
When I finally did arrive in Mombasa, I started at once to attend classes in Swahili given by an Irish priest. (Because of him, most of the new arrivals in Mombasa inevitably spoke Swahili with a strong Irish brogue).

Before I had even acquired a smattering of the lingo, however, I was visited in my office by the priest himself and a German missionary. The priest explained that his friend, who could speak Swahili but no English — had arrived by ship from Germany and had a whole Noah's ark of animals to tranship to **Kindi**, in Northern Tanganyika.

### Beer by the bell!

Naturally, I asked for full details of the animals, but unfortunately the German's knowledge of Swahili did not include farm animals (and the Irishman did not speak German).

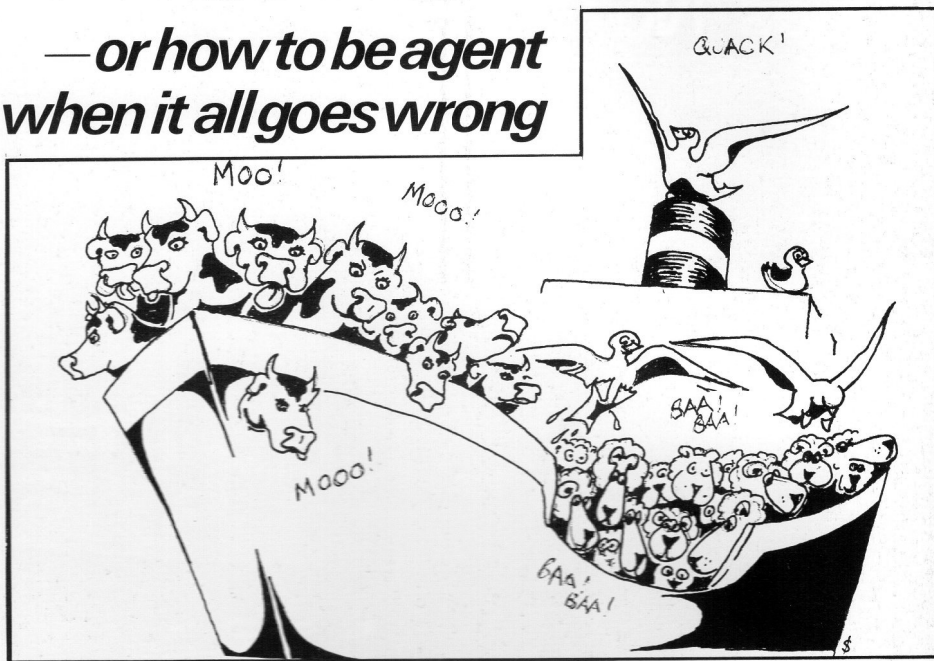
I was suddenly confronted therefore, by a



'It was discovered too late that the walkie-talkies on the ship leaving and on the one arriving were operating on the same wavelength'

# 'Can't Fly, Have Flu'

— or how to be agent when it all goes wrong



German holding up two fingers and saying loudly "Zwei moo-moo, zwei baa-baa, swei quack-quack"!

By the time he had finished his list, the entire office staff had gathered round my desk to watch the display, and for weeks afterwards I heard a surreptitious "moo-moo" whenever I came into the office.

Ships' officers, as always, were most hospitable, and business on board was quite often accompanied by a little light refreshment. On one small ship, the coolest place was the bridge, and since the engine room telegraph bell could be heard in the galley, it was regularly used to summon the steward to bring beer. . . .

On one occasion, the captain rang the usual signal — "full ahead" — but unfortunately forgot to 'ring off' the engine first. There was a sudden swirl of water and a jerk as the ship went full ahead! Luckily the mooring ropes held, but the Chief Engineer had to be placated smartly with a couple of noggins to restore his morale.

### Man of letters

The same ship was later sold to a firm in the Arabian Gulf and for the long voyage involved we had to lash extra drums of diesel and water to the deck. Pirates were very active on the Arabian coast at that time, and as the ship's maximum speed was six knots, I thought that the captain should have a little personal defence. I bought him a .45 revolver and ammunition.

Fortunately he was not attacked, and reached Muscat safely.

In smaller branches like Zanzibar, one person had to combine the duties of shipping agent and insurance agent, and had also to be responsible for the subsidiary firm handling cargo in the docks. This led to a number of problems, correspondence occasionally becoming more than a little involved.

I recall one Indian merchant whose cargo arrived

'Unfortunately, the German knew no Swahili, so I was suddenly confronted by him holding up two fingers and shouting: "Zwei moo-moo, zwei baa-baa, zwei quack-quack!"'

damaged on the quay. He claimed against the shipping line, to which I replied that his cargo was intact when it left the ship's side.

He then claimed against the wharfage company, and this time I replied that I was astonished the shipping line had repudiated liability and suggested he claim against the underwriters!

### THANKS, STEVE

The cartoons used to illustrate Bill Hall's reminiscences were drawn specially for 'New Contacts' by Steve Dunnings, senior data control clerk in the Computer Operations Room at Richmond House. Nice work, Steve. . . .

Unfortunately, it transpired that we were also agents for the insurance people, so I wrote to them asking if they would agree to pay up, forwarding at the same time copies of the letters from the shipping line and wharfage company (signature omitted, of course).

I am glad to report that just as the Indian merchant was threatening to sue everybody in sight, the insurance company agreed to pay up, and I was saved the embarrassment of attending court to give evidence against myself. . . .

There were many links with the past, one of which was our Town Crier. He was a pleasant old Arab who on the morning of any embarkation, either for our coastal steamer or the bigger ships bound for Bombay, would tour the bazaar ringing a brass bell and shouting out the time of embarkation. I cannot remember a passenger ever being left behind.

Another ancient custom was sounding the 'sail-o'. There was a signal tower on the water front and at the top of the tower a large drum with lever-controlled pump which pumped air into it. Immediately a ship was sighted in the North channel, a harbour employee would pump air into the

continued on Page 9



Terry Hipsey (left) receiving his award from ACTS director John Ormiston.

## TERRY MAKES THE GRADE

It was a proud day (obviously) for trainee Terry Hipsey when he received from ACTS director John Ormiston a Certificate of Competence accepting him as a fully-qualified service engineer with Container Repairs.

Because the industry does not as yet have a formally-recognised qualification system, Container Repairs Limited — operational now for five years — decided to take the lead and set up a comprehensive training scheme for newcomers to the business.

A number of trainees were engaged and are now undergoing a three-year grounding in all aspects of the company's operation.

Terry, first of the trainees (he joined in 1980) has shown a particular interest in refrigeration engineering which has been developed by in-house training and specialist courses.

## The Mayor calls on Pauline

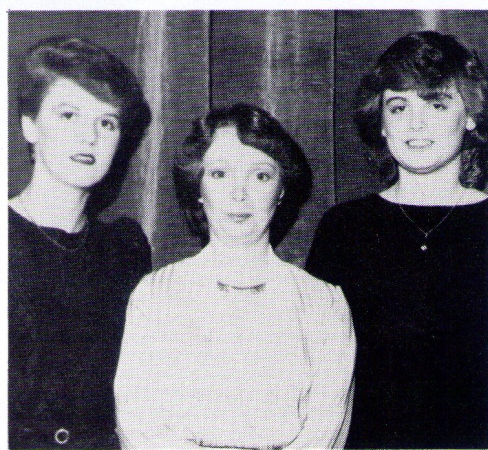


Pauline, with some of the gifts from her Head Office colleagues.

Pauline Williams, three years a secretary in Technical Services at Richmond House, had her best-ever Christmas gift a little early last year.

Son Mark arrived, fit and kicking, on December 21; which meant that he and mother spent their first Christmas together in hospital, where, in addition to plenty of family visitors, they had an 'official' call from the Mayor of Romsey on her Christmas Day hospital tour.

When she left Richmond House last October, Pauline was inundated with gifts and good wishes from friends and colleagues. Presents included a baby bath, bouncing cradle, changing mat and jewellery — the latter for herself, of course.



The girls who walked for others — Sarah Chamberlain, Doreen Longman and Jo Draysey.

## Three 'heart' girls who beat all comers

HERE ARE THE THREE GIRLS who put on the Page One boots last October and raised £126.20p to help others suffering from heart troubles.

When senior Documentary clerk Doreen Longman, tēlex operator Jo Draysey and Administration telephonist/receptionist Sarah Chamberlain read that the British Heart Foundation was organising a sponsored walk round and round Southampton Common (and that's some walk!) they joined the rush to volunteer.

All three completed the course (12 times round the Common — a total of 30 kilometres), and though footsore and weary by the end, were delighted with their achievement.

So was the British Heart Foundation. To mark the

fact that the ACTS Three got more sponsors than any other group (a total of 144!), the Foundation gave them a special trophy in addition to their certificates of merit.

When 'New Contacts' contacted Graham Dobson, Southampton and Eastleigh Chairman, he said:- "We were delighted with the wonderful team effort of the ACTS ladies. Forty walkers took part, and since the sum raised was £500, you will realise what a major contribution ACTS made.

"We just hope the ladies will compete again next year — and break their own record".

## CONTACT POINTS — NO 2

# The light at the end of the tunnel

To everyone involved in international liner shipping, it must seem that the recession is never ending. Obviously, containerships can carry only what other people produce and this has been reflected in trade levels over the last few years.

There has, however, been another related but separate problem for the Conference lines we serve. This is the increase in competition from outsiders operating at non-commercial freight rates, either to carve out a place in the trade or to generate hard currency earnings.

This increase in capacity, just when cargo tonnages are depressed, has kept freight rates down to levels which not long ago would have seemed ridiculously uneconomic.

With 30% overtonnaging across the container trades, the lines will probably never return to the earnings levels enjoyed in the early and mid seventies.

## Leasing boxes

But there are now clear signs of an improvement in world trade and we can hope for a similar improvement in our fortunes.

The quest continues for new business to augment our main role of providing ACT Lines with services and expertise.

The company has decided to enter the container leasing business, in a small way to start with, by purchasing for lease, integral reefer containers.

CRL have opened what has so far proved to be a thriving new depot in Felixstowe, where a joint ACTS/CRL facility has captured new business from outside the group.

We are now providing some operational services to BHLR in the South American trade and we have provided refrigeration clip-on units to Johnson Scanstar in Acapulco, Mexico. (Sorry, no vacancies for on-the-spot supervision!)

## TERMINAL NEWCOMERS

Ginny Callum, wife of Soton Terminal transport assistant Andy Callum, gave birth to a baby girl at 9.42 p.m. on January 1. Hannah Stacey (sister to Ben and Robert) weighed in at 7lb 11½oz.

A fortnight later, Tanya Jowett, wife of transport superintendent Peter Jowett, also had a daughter. Sophie Lillian tipped the scales at 8lb 4oz.

# SHIPS of the LINES No1

Elegance, grace, good manners, service—

# 2000 ATLANTIC RECORD YEARS

By PETER HUGHES

When the first Cunard ship "Britannia" — a wooden paddlesteamer 207 feet long and of 1,154 gross tons — sailed on her maiden voyage in July 1840, Samuel Cunard could hardly have envisaged how the shipping industry would develop over the following 120 years or the part his Company would play in that development.

Between the early Cunard ships and the "Queen Mary" the gulf is wide, and while it is not possible to mention all the ships that sailed under the Cunard flag, there are a number which marked a significant stage in the Company's history. "Persia" (1885), for example, the first iron Cunard ship; "Scotia", 3,871 tons (1862) and in her day the largest steamer in the world; and "Servia", 7,392 tons (1881), the Cunard's first steel liner and largest and fastest vessel afloat at the time.

It was, however, the period from the turn of the century until World War II that saw probably the greatest advancement in passenger liners. In 1905, for instance, the "Caronia" and "Cirmanic" (20,000 tons) entered service in what was to be the pioneer era of the great liners. The first of them, the "Lusitania" (30,396 tons), constructed on Clydebank, was delivered in September 1907, to be followed a few months later by the "Mauretania" (30,704 tons).

## FASTEST AFLOAT

The "Lusitania", sadly, was an early victim of the First World War, being torpedoed and sunk off Ireland, whilst the "Mauretania" became the fastest British liner afloat and held the Blue Riband of the Atlantic for 22 years.

Indeed, between 1840 and 1934 the much coveted Blue Riband was held by Cunard for 49 years.

However, two ships were radically to change passenger shipping by their size and speed — the "Queen Mary" and "Queen Elizabeth".

Plans for the "Queen Mary" were first drawn in 1926, but never had such a ship been built and it was not until 1930 that the keel was finally laid at John Brown's yard on Clydebank. "No. 534" (her shipyard number) was to become as well-known throughout the world as any name. Progress on the hull was rapid and by the end of 1931 it

dominated the shipyard.

Then came the economic depression of the 30's, and work on the 534 had to be suspended until April, 1934. By then the ship had become a symbol of the country's industrial recovery, and when work was restarted, world trade also showed signs of recovery.

Problems of another kind now required solving. How was the hull of a 80,000-ton ship more than 1,000 feet long to be transferred from the stocks to the river? Some 2,350 tons of drag chain were used to check the ship as she entered the river, it being estimated in advance that she would travel 1,194 feet. In fact, she travelled 1,196 feet, indicating the degree of accuracy attained throughout the operation. When the ship was launched by King George V and Queen Mary in September, 1934, No. 534 ceased to be a mere shipyard number and became "Queen Mary".

The ship left Southampton on her maiden voyage on May 27 1936, at a time when Atlantic travel was reaching a peak. In 1937 she carried more passengers across the Atlantic than any other ship, and when war was declared in 1939, she was on route to New York with 2,230 passengers, the largest



Captain Treasure Jones — still maintains contact with his old ship.

number she had ever carried.

During the winter of 1939/40, she remained in New York while it was considered how best she could be used. It was finally decided to employ her as a troop transport, principally because her great size meant she could be adapted to carrying large numbers of troops, and her speed of well over 30 knots would enable her to outrun hostile vessels, particularly U-Boats.

In March, 1940, the "Queen Mary" left New York for Sydney, Australia, which was to be her base for the next two years transporting Australian troops first to the UK and later to Middle and Far East. In January, 1942, she returned to New York and then went to Boston where she embarked 8,200 American troops for Australia.

## FERRYING AMERICANS

Returning to the Clyde in 1943, she settled down on the North Atlantic, ferrying the American Army for the invasion of Europe. Despite severe weather conditions in the winter months of 1943/4 she carried 10,000 troops each voyage and, as the weather eased, this rose to 12,000.

In all her wartime service, the "Queen Mary" had neither gun nor torpedo fired at her, her only touch with the grim reality of war being in October 1942. Because the "Queen Mary", like her sister ship "Queen Elizabeth", depended upon speed for safety, she sailed alone and not in convoy or with escorts like other merchant ships.

However, on October 2, because of the presence of numerous submarine wolf packs, it was decided that the cruiser "Curacao" and six destroyers should meet with the "Queen Mary" off Ireland and ensure her safe passage to Southampton.

The "Curacao" took up station directly ahead of the "Queen Mary" which was maintaining passage in the zig-zag pattern of war time. It became evident that the "Queen Mary" was far faster and the "Curacao" was warned to keep her distance.

Unfortunately, during her zigging and zagging, the "Queen Mary" caught up with the "Curacao", hitting her amidships and slicing the warship in two. Sadly, 337 British sailors were drowned out of a ship's company of 438.

It was not until September, 1946, that the "Queen Mary"

continued on opposite page

## \* THE PRINCE AND THE MARY

When building of the Queen Mary was delayed on Clydeside during the depression, David Kirkwood (later 1st Baron Kirkwood), Member of Parliament for the area, waged a ceaseless war to get work re-started.

One day in the lobby of the House of Commons, Lady Astor approached him and said that the Prince of Wales was going to Scotland to see for himself what conditions were like there and wanted to talk to Kirkwood about it.

At first Kirkwood refused to see him. Later he received a formal invitation to a reception at Lady Astor's home. The card said 'Decorations'. He told Lady Astor that he had no clothes other than the ones he was wearing and no decorations 'but my specs'.

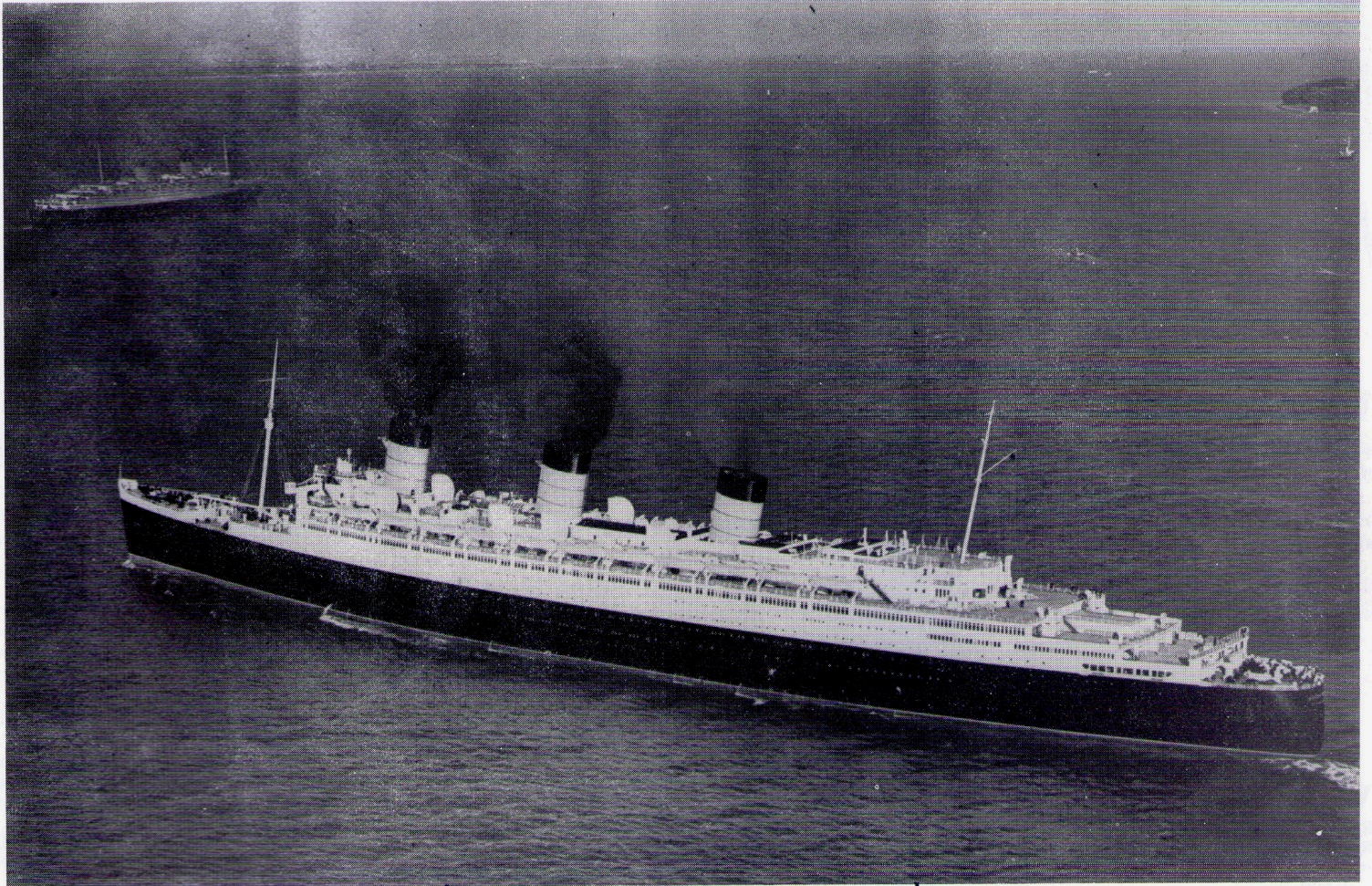
Lady Astor telephoned him and said:- "The Prince of Wales says it is not your clothes but yourself he wants to talk to, and that if you wear your serge suit that is your best decoration."

When they did meet, Kirkwood told the Prince:- "I want you to come to Clydeside and see the Cunarder. That ship means work, life, the prestige of the British people and the Blue Riband of the Atlantic."

"Well, tell me about it all," said the Prince. And so Kirkwood did. The Prince went to Clydeside. . . .

— these were the stock-in-trade of the Queen Mary

# CROSSINGS—AND 14



continued from opposite page

demobbed and the job of refitting was begun. Enormous quantities of furniture and fittings had been put ashore in places like Australia and New York and these had now all to be gathered together.

Her reconditioning complete, the "Queen Mary" sailed for New York on July 31, 1947 and with her sister ship "Queen Elizabeth", began a partnership which was to dominate Atlantic passenger travel for the next 20 years.

It was an era never to be repeated, with politicians, film stars, the rich and famous, travelling in luxury for five days (single trip) aboard a ship which was to become known for her elegance, grace, good manners and superb service.

For fourteen years, the "Queen Mary" was the fastest ship on the Atlantic, holding the Blue Riband with a speed of 31.7 knots. She held the record until surrendering it to the "United States" in 1952.

With the increase in air travel competition becoming so great, the "Queen Mary" was finally withdrawn from service in October 1967. By then she had completed 1,000 round trips on the Atlantic, carried 2,112,000 fare paying passengers, and had sailed a total of 3,792,271 nautical miles from the day she was launched — a distance roughly equivalent to twelve round trips to the moon.

In October 1967, she left Southampton for the last time on a voyage of 14,500 miles to Portugal, the Canary Islands,

## THE BOOK OF THE SHIP

One of the best and most authoritative books about the great Cunard liner, "The Mary, the Inevitable Ship", was written by Neil Potter and Jack Frost and published by George G. Harrap and Co Ltd. It is a must for all who love ships and the sea, and 'New Contacts' gratefully acknowledges it as the source of the red asterisked stories on these pages. THE EDITOR.

'Cunarders' meet — The Queen Mary in the foreground, the Mauretania on the left, off Long Island, New York. (Picture by kind permission of Liverpool University Archives).

South America, round Cape Horn to Long Beach, California where she arrived in December.

To-day, some 17 years later, the "Queen Mary" is maintained at Long Beach as a museum of the sea, hotel conference centre, and tourist complex. It is fitting that she is there as a tribute to British engineering, craftsmanship and seamanship and of an era never to be repeated.

Master of the "Queen Mary" during her final years in service, including the voyage to Long Beach, was Captain

Treasure-Jones. Following a period as consultant on the Long Beach project, he retired in August 1968, but still maintains contact with the ship and went to California a couple of years ago for the 15th anniversary celebrations.

Captain Treasure-Jones now lives with his wife in Chandlers Ford, a dormitory town midway between Southampton and Winchester. During the days of the great liners, Chandlers Ford was known as the "Cunard Village" because it was home to so many seafarers.

Last August Captain and Mrs Treasure-Jones, with their three sons, one daughter and seven grandchildren, celebrated their golden wedding. Although retired, he is

continued on Page 6

## \* CHURCHILL PLANS AT SEA

Far-reaching decisions about World War II were made aboard the Queen Mary by Winston Churchill, Cabinet Ministers, generals and others as the great ship ploughed her way across the Atlantic.

The ship, then ferrying American troops, was dry and when Churchill first heard of this he pulled what is described as "a very glum face". It was decided that his accommodation would have its own licensing laws and that drink could be served!

On one occasion when a steward was moving around pouring out tumblers of water before going round with the champagne, Churchill said:- "Stop pouring all that water out. It is too depressing a sight."

A story is told, perhaps apocryphal, of an occasion at Halifax, Nova Scotia, when a small pilot boat was trying to get alongside the massive liner. It made several attempts, but each time missed. One of the officers on the Mary's bridge finally leaned over and shouted:- "You stay where you are. We will come alongside you."

'Demobbed' from war service in September 1946, the Queen Mary had carried 810,730 'passengers' — British and American troops, prisoners of war and wounded, in addition to VIPs, and had steamed half a million miles.



Some of the Central Services team — now 'a little right of central'!

## Now Basildon gets a face lift . . .

Visitors to Basildon these days are apt to think they're either in Fort Apache or Hampton Court Maze! This is due mainly to the region's new slim-line look, with departments separated by screens and the entrance way running slap through the middle.

A review of space needs showed that staff could all fit into one side of the top floor of Northgate House. This involved some knocking down here and building up there, and the change has now been successfully completed.

Central Services is to-day a little right of central as you go in, Accounts are also on the right (at the far end), with Imports remaining pretty much where they were on the left, separated from Exports by the new Computer Room. Credit Control, if they will

## . . . and also a new No. 2

Vernon Pearce, former Import Commercial Manager and Export Manager, Southern Region, has succeeded John Wilson as Assistant Regional Manager, ACTS Basildon. John left at the end of last year after 11 years with the company.

Before moving to Basildon, Vernon was senior Organisation and Methods officer at Richmond House and spent much of his time touring the regions, training staff in the use of the EHCL and, later, the ACTA on-line systems.

Married with two sons, aged 5 and 14, he is a keen photographer and confessed 'homebrew fanatic'. He is vice-president of Southend and District Junior Chamber, and in 1981, in a national competition sponsored by the Provincial Building Society, was voted runner-up to Britain's Young Business Personality of the Year. He won a prize of £250.

Vernon has been succeeded as Import Commercial Manager by Len Tomlinson, who joined the Basildon SCA Imports team from Manchester 11 years ago.

Len's wife Vera is in the Credit Control department.



Vernon Pearce



Len Tomlinson



Basildon's new 'pride and joy' — the Burroughs 1995 computer.

forgive the liberty, are now 'the ham in the middle of the sandwich'. (Delicious, too!).

### Pride and joy

Pride and joy of the new set-up is a Burroughs 1995 computer (being installed as we went to Press), first of its kind in a regional office.

Instead of individual job folders for each ship, and staff fighting for progress books and having to jump up and down to move T-cards on a control board, VDU's will be used to update computerised records for each container.

Remote Printers to be installed at Grays and Tilbury will mean that transport notes can be issued directly a booking is made.

The advanced computer system will also handle the complex 'phased delivery' calculations and the raising of supplementary invoices, and will also have a link with the CASE Telex switcher to enable telexes to go direct to merchants and other regions, thus speeding up response to importer's queries — and also container deliveries.

# The Queen Mary

continued from previous page

extremely active and keen at DIY, fully maintaining his four bedroomed detached house with some ¼ acre of garden. He is also on numerous committees, including community and retirement associations, and gives help to the blind people of the area. His sporting interests include golf and he is playing captain of the Master Mariners' Cricket Team. As Mrs. Treasure-Jones aptly says:- "I haven't noticed any difference since he retired!"

However, it is memories of his sea-going career which he recounts vividly and with great pleasure. Of the famous

## \* SHIPS THAT PASS

After her first journey from the Clyde to Southampton, the Queen Mary was followed by a flotilla of craft of every sort as she moved up Southampton Water. Three quarters of a million people watched her from the banks.

As she began this journey, she was welcomed by the outward-bound German liner Bremen. Dressed with flags, the German ship wirelessly:-

*Our heartiest congratulations for the completion of our youngest and biggest companion of the sea. May our first meeting be the beginning of a long and good co-operation.* (signed) COMMODORE ZIEGEBEIN, OFFICERS AND CREW.

Just four years later, the Queen Mary received her 'calling up' papers. Britain and Germany were at war.

people he met during his service on both "Queen" liners — people like the Duke of Windsor, Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, Joan Crawford, Elizabeth Taylor and many others.

During a conversation with Isaac Wolfson he was asked whether his uniform was made by Wolfson's company. "No," said Captain Treasure-Jones, "but if you like to send me a sample, I'll be happy to wear it and let everyone know who made it."

Sadly, it never arrived. . . .

## FINAL FACTS

The Queen Mary is 1,019ft 6 inches long, 237 ft high (keel to masthead), had 1,285 crew to 2,038 passengers, 2,000 portholes and windows, ten MILLION rivets, 38 public rooms, 10 miles of carpet and a rudder weighing 140 tons.

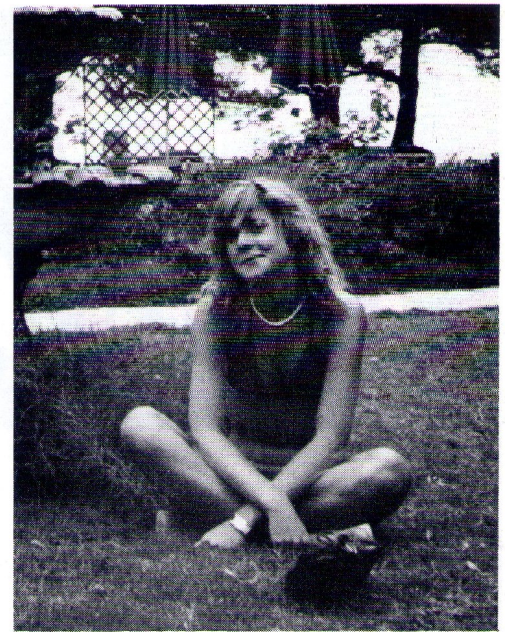
When on the Atlantic service, she carried 26,000lb of beef, 6,500 roasting chickens, 55,000lb of potatoes and 41,000lb of other vegetables, 2,400 bottles of champagne (plus 1,440 half bottles), 2,400 bottles of scotch, 1,200 bottles of gin, and one million five hundred thousand cigarettes.

It's true what they say about Scandinavia?

# FORESTS, FJORDS AND THOSE LOVELY BLONDES

*JOHN JOHNSON, a management trainee with ACTS at Richmond House, is young enough (and independent enough) to please himself alone when he plans a holiday, wise enough to choose a place like Scandinavia for a grand tour of his own designing — and shrewd enough to include in that design a five-day sojourn in Stockholm with a glamorous Swedish blonde he met a couple of years ago when working, during university holidays, as a waiter in Greece. (He eventually got a degree in politics and economics).*

*In the hope that his own experiences may help and give ideas to others adventurously inclined, John here reports on "SCANDINAVIA BY INTERAIL".*



Ann (above) and, below, a view of Stockholm from the Kaknas Tower. 'It helps if you are shown around by a lovely blonde.'

**T**o most people, myself included, Scandinavia conjures up visions of forests, fjords, Volvos and gorgeous blondes. With all four in mind — and not necessarily in that order — I boarded a DFDS ferry at Harwich, with rucksack on back, bound for Esjberg at the start of what turned out to be a 3,000-mile Scandinavian Interail holiday I shall never forget.

My plan, quite simply, was to do a circular tour of Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway, and but for the fact that I did not have time to reach the North Cape, northernmost tip of Europe and my furthest objective, the rest of the scheduled journey went perfectly to plan. . . . Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki, Narvic, Lofoten Islands, Trondheim, Bergen, Oslo and, finally, Gothenberg. . . . with brief calls on the way to ACT's Scandinavian agents, Bendix and Co, and Scandinavian Shipping and Transport.

But you, as a reader, may well ask why the rucksack? Why the Interail? And why Scandinavia anyway?

The rucksack because, striking out alone in search of pastures and places new, it is an ideal way of carrying your own accommodation and cutting down on hotel bills! Packed in with the spare shirts, the night gear, toothbrush and other paraphernalia, I carried a lightweight tent — having checked up with the Scandinavian Tourist Board before leaving England that there were lots of excellent sites on which to pitch it.

On average, I suppose, I spent around £3 a night on camping site fees. I found the sites well organised, with good



toilets and washrooms — and, in a number of cases, first-class facilities for cooking and washing and drying clothes.

Why Interail? Because, for young people of 26 and under, I believe there is no better or economical way of getting around the world comfortably and quickly. For a basic £115, I was entitled to free 2nd class rail travel wherever I wanted to go on my 3,000-mile, four-week journey — and half fare every time I had to use a ferry, such as on the original crossing to Esjberg, and later when making the longish journey from Stockholm, in Sweden, to Helsinki, in Finland.

Here again, I did quite a lot of planning in advance, working out the route I wanted to take — and, as far as possible, the timing I wished to keep. In general terms, I suppose, you could describe the holiday as 'drifting from one place to another at will', but a certain amount of planning **must** be done if the whole thing is not to degenerate into a shambles.

And, finally, why Scandinavia? I confess that my earlier encounter in Greece had more than a little to do with it, but everything I had read and been told about the countries since childhood had led me to believe that here I would find breathtakingly beautiful scenery, friendly people and the warmest of warm welcomes.

I found nothing during my four-week stay to shatter any of my illusions. The scenery IS spectacular, the girls ARE exceptionally beautiful — and if I say that in the spectacle stakes I would place Sweden's rolling plains, covered with a

mass of trees, ahead of the more widely-talked-about fjords (superb though they are) this is a personal choice with which I realise thousands would disagree.

And in addition, Scandinavia offers scores of other (many of them unexpected) attractions. In Swedish Lapland, for instance, I took my first log-cabin sauna. Many camp sites have sauna facilities at no extra cost.

Indeed, contrary to widely-held opinion, following recent devaluations, Scandinavia in most respects is not inordinately expensive. Generally, one gets good value for money, alcohol being one of the blatant exceptions. When I tell you that the equivalent of one pint of beer costs £2.50, you will understand why I choose to get inebriated on a series of delicious fish dishes and smorgas (open sandwiches).

During my stay in Stockholm, where I was lucky enough to have delightful Ann to show me around and introduce me to the night life the Scandinavians themselves know, we went one evening to a restaurant/cafe close to the capital's opera house, a haunt frequented by young and not-so-young Scandinavians and where you are likely to bump into politicians, pop stars and hoy poloi alike.

It is a gay, fashionable and attractive place where several hundred people on any evening can be found dancing, eating and drinking the hours away. Ann and I had a splendid meal. The bill came to just over £3 each. Before eating, she

continued on Page 8



Flam, in Norway's Sognefjord — the kind of breathtaking scenery expected by visitors to Scandinavia.

## Norman scales new heights!

It is NOT true that Norman Hornigold, former Terminal Controller at Tilbury, is to fly a helicopter so that Ted Moulton can test his double glazing, but it IS true that he has left ACTS after 10½ years to seek new heights as a representative of Everest, the double glazing firm.

He will be much missed by his former Tilbury colleagues who, knowing him well, clubbed together to give him a wall clock, a bottle of gin and a twenty pound note!

★★★★★★★★★★★★

Former West Ham United apprentice Darren Busby, aged 18, has joined ACTS at Tilbury as a courier/control clerk. At 5'4", Darren failed to make the West Ham side, but retains keen sporting interests.

After one or two incidents with his car, Tilbury is already calling him Hunt the Shunt!

★★★★★★★★★★★★

Tilbury have not forgotten (though Soton may want to) the 4-0 soccer thrashing they gave a Head Office team in October. Busby (2) and Earle (2) were the scorers. Thanks to Eric Sims for organising the trip to Tilbury.

# Why Sir Francis had to disappear!

**ACTS staff at Tilbury and Grays have at least one thing in common with the Russians — Orsett Hall, in the village of Orsett, Essex.**

When they held their highly-successful dinner dances at the Hall in 1982 and 1983, the ACTS party couldn't fail to notice a red flag, bearing hammer and sickle, on one of the walls — and were told it was a 'non-political gift' from officers of Russian cruise ships calling at Tilbury. The Russians, it seems, had been anxious to show their appreciation for a bit of good, old-fashioned British hospitality!

## By David Beck

Missing these days from the Hall — now a popular hotel and restaurant, run since 1977 by its present owner, the redoubtable Ivan Grimwood — is a portrait of Sir Francis Henry Douglas Charlton Whitmore, whose formidable features once dominated the vestibule of his then home.

### Too valuable

Sadly, in recent years, lieutenant Colonel Sir Francis Whitmore has had to 'disappear' — his portrait was found to be so valuable that even the thriving business of the modern Hall could not support the necessary insurance premium and, along with four antique Georgian mirrors, with hand-carved frames, the Lieutenant Colonel was sent to Sotheby's to be auctioned off.

### Won at cards

Much remains at the Hall, however, of his personal pedigree and military effects. The

DAVID BECK joined ACTS in 1982 and is a management trainee with the company at Tilbury.



The features that once dominated the vestibule of Orsett Hall — Sir Francis Whitmore, soldier, DSO, Knight of the Bath and Lord Lieutenant of his county.

Whitmore family traced its lineage from fourteenth century Shropshire, and acquired Orsett Hall when, in 1884, Thomas Whitmore won it, at a game of cards, from a brother officer in the Royal Horse Guards.

Sir Francis himself, born in 1872, distinguished himself as Lieutenant Colonel Commanding the Essex Yeomanry (1915-18) and 10th Prince of Wales Own Royal Hussars (1918-19), and, later, as Hon. Colonel of the 104th Essex Yeomanry R.H.A.

He won the DSO (with Territorial Decoration) to add

to the Order of the Knight of the Bath, held in the family since 1774. As Lord of the Manors of Orsett, Stifford, North Benfleet and Corringham, he was High Sheriff of Essex and Lord Lieutenant of the county.

A large glass case in Orsett Hall vestibule, in which his portrait once hung, still holds mementoes of his military adventures and local benevolence. Sir Francis' uniform and cavalry saddle are there, and so are ornamented swords from the Sudan and Southern Africa.

### Pig sticking days!

On their way to the restaurant, diners can see a fine pig-sticking stick, but may prefer to ignore the human scalps, with twisted strands of black hair, bound to the shafts of Zulu spears!

Back home, Sir Francis set up a basket factory to employ local men disabled by wartime injuries, and some of their products are on show.

So is a fascinating book recording wages paid to the Hall's staff. In September 1925, for instance, a month's wage for a lower grade servant is shown as £2.10.00. And a certain Ethel Culfear was on £1.16.8d!

In its heyday the Hall had its own fire brigade, consisting of all those estate workers who could be summoned by the great bell, cast in 1778 and now hanging in the banquetting suite.

One servant at the Hall was himself to follow in the military tradition of the family, and he is now commemorated in photographs in the hotel reception area. Brian Papworth, hall boy from 1933, footballer from 1937, and Bomber Pilot in 1939 was killed over Turin in 1943 at the age of 23. He is buried in the Military Cemetery at Genoa.

In the same room, the passing is recorded of Sir Francis Whitmore in 1962. The photographs of the lieutenant colonel's funeral procession through Orsett village, his coffin borne on a gun carriage and draped in the Union Jack, mark the end of an era in the ancient life of the Hall.

FOOTNOTE — ACTS Basildon are planning to follow the Tilbury and Grays example and use the Hall for a function next Christmas.

## FJORDS, BLONDES

continued from page 7

had a Scandinavian liqueur and I had a beer. Together they cost us just about the same as the meal. . . .

A bonus one does not have to pay for in northern Scandinavia, however, is the extra sunlight during the midsummer months — and the fantastic skies at sunset.

Scandinavia also has a great shipping tradition, from the Vikings, relics of whose ships remain preserved, to the sophisticated and specialised vessels of to-day, belonging to lines with whom ACT both co-operate and compete.

When I went to see ACT's agents in Gothenberg, Stefan Jorkas was good enough to give me a personally-guided tour of Scandinavia's main port.

By courtesy of Atlantic Container Line, agents for Unifeeder container services, we boarded a feeder vessel at the Skandia Terminal, and watched a large consignment of Volvos being loaded into ANL boxes booked by our Scandinavian agents.

These cars were destined first for Hamburg — and then for subsequent transshipment to Australia by New Zealand Pacific.

I, too, was destined for Hamburg on the last leg of my rail and ferry holiday. I found the metropolis of Hamburg a complete contrast to the smaller and cleaner cities I had visited further north, but its giant port, I must say, was most impressive — making Southampton look like a small fishing quay by comparison!

If I had to choose my favourite place from the entire expedition, I would plump for Stockholm, an elegant city stretching across an archipelago.

But I admit it helps if the temperature soars to well over 30 degrees centigrade and you are being shown the sights by a native — blonde and very lovely. . . .

## NOW GUESS WHO SAID WHAT. . . .

1. Repartee is something we think of 24 hours too late.
2. Some of the commonest English words are not in use with us — such as 'ousemaid, 'ospital, 'istorian, 'otel.
3. As to the adjective, when in doubt — strike it out!
4. I have been an author for 22 years and ass for 55.
5. There are two times in a man's life when he shouldn't speculate — when he can't afford it, and when he can.

1. Mark Twain. 2. Mark Twain. 3. Mark Twain. 4. Mark Twain. 5. Mark Twain.



# FROM HI-DE-HI TO KEEP-FIT

## It's all in a year's work for Soton sports club

By The Sports Editor



**ACTS MANAGING DIRECTOR Peter Bainbridge (extreme right) with sports prize-winners at the Head Office Christmas dinner and dance. L to r:- Doreen Longman (Sports and Social Club chairman); Chris Summerfield; Hugh Townsend; Jackie Sibley; Gill Creed; Alan Wilson; Kate Butt; Mike Babey; and Barry Kirk.**

**W**hat have Russ Abbott, keep fit, the Babes in the Wood, fishing, horse racing and Hi-de-Hi in common? Answer.... Head Office Sports and Social Club! And if that puzzles you, read on. . .

The Richmond House club reports a hectic 12 months in 1983 during which a wider-than-ever range of activities was covered. For instance:- **THEATRE-GOERS** went to see 'Hi-de-Hi' at Bournemouth, Russ Abbott

at Southampton and 'Babes in the Wood' at Southsea. (A trip to enjoy Tommy Steele's stage version of the Gene Kelly film classic, 'Singing in the Rain', is in the pipeline for 1984).

**RACING ENTHUSIASTS** enjoyed live action at Sandown Park (horses) and Portsmouth (dogs), and for those preferring inanimate horse power, there was car racing at Thruxton, near Andover. (This coincided with a Tilbury v Head Office soccer match, so for one day only the club split up and travelled in opposite directions).

**FITNESS BUFFS** have been following a series of keep-fit classes at a local leisure centre. (Participants claim they find it stimulating! Next time, maybe, they'll try aerobics).

**FISHERMEN** have enjoyed several days of deep sea fishing. Leaving at 8.30 am by charter boat from Lymington, they have settled off the Needles and, weather permitting, fished until late afternoon. Catches have included skate, conger eel, dogfish and mackerel.

## Fund raising

For those not so enthusiastic about bobbing about in a boat for a whole day, special mackerel evenings have been organised as 'family affairs'. These involve fishing for only one or two hours followed by a trip into Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, for 'light' refreshment.

Southampton Waters have also served as an ideal training ground for those wanting to try their hand at windsurfing and dinghy sailing. Several devotees have emerged as a result of two weekends of tuition at local training centres.

The Club has continued its fund raising for local charities, and has once again provided significant help for Julian Fiorentini, for whom they bought a £500 electrically-propelled wheelchair in 1981.

The guarantee on Julian's chair has now expired and maintenance costs have rocketed. When the club heard that expenses had reached a level where Julian might have to sacrifice his chair, they came to the rescue with fund raising raffles which have enabled him to keep mobile.

At Christmas, the club held its annual party for children of Richmond House staff, 70 youngsters having a wonderful time at St. Denys Community Centre, each receiving a gift on leaving for home.

An all-day shopping spree by motor-coach to London, followed by a tour of the capital's Christmas lights, was another feature of the Club's festive programme.

## The results

Meanwhile, sporting activities, as expected, have continued throughout the year, competitions for the annual trophies extended this year to include a car rally. For the less energetic, Sue Arnold, Operations Department Secretary, organised another inter-department quiz. Sixteen teams (including directors) took part, a knock-out contest resulting in victory for the Operations team of Hugh Townsend (Traffic Manager), George Lang (Marine Co-ordinator) and Brian Appleton (Stock Control Clerk).

The awards were presented by ACTS Managing Director Peter Bainbridge during the Head Office dinner and dance at the Polygon Hotel.

Apart from the quiz (above), the winners were:-  
**Darts, singles:-** Jackie Sibley (Leasing clerk, Operations).  
**Darts, ladies' doubles:-** Jackie Sibley and Kate Butt (Data prep clerk, Operations).  
**Darts, men's doubles:-** Mike Babey (trainee computer operator) and Alan Bird (chief computer operator).  
**Darts, mixed doubles:-** Gill Creed (stock controller, CAMEL); and Alan Wilson (cargo handling assistant, Operations).  
**Pool:-** Barry Kirk (Programmer).  
**Car rally:-** Chris Summerfield (accounts clerk, Finance).

## 'Can't Fly, Have Flu'

continued  
from Page 2

drum (30 strokes) and hoist the vessel's house flag.

He would then release the air through a valve and a loud booming noise wafted over the town. If a ship were sighted from the South, two booms were needed, so he had to do it all over again! (It was comforting to know that the cable we had received some hours earlier was being confirmed!)

As facilities were limited, considerable ingenuity was occasionally required. The Americans had installed a tracking station for their "Project Mercury" and wanted to bring in a 7-ton generator. The largest crane on the wharf (hand operated) would lift only 5 tons from the barges, so we arranged for the generator to be put on a trailer in Mombasa and loaded onto an old landing craft.

## The crowbar hold-up

We then borrowed some spare telegraph poles from the Post Office and with them and a few planks made a ramp up the beach by my office.

At 4 a.m. at high spring tide one morning, the ship arrived. We drove a crowbar into the street outside the office, attached a Tyfor winch with block and tackle, and the trailer was hauled safely ashore.

Unfortunately, the crowbar stuck in the street and a policeman had to guide traffic round it until it could be removed!

In such an outpost of Empire, protocol was of course very strict. As Commodore of the sailing club, my wife and I asked the British Resident to dinner on the occasion of the club's annual dance. Courtesy demanded that we see him off from our house, but as Commodore, I also had to be at the club in time to greet him officially. Fortunately, his driver knew the drill and drove very slowly so that we could dash past him to get there first.

The advent of the small hand-held Japanese walkie-talkie was a welcome boon because all ships had to anchor in the harbour and previously communication was by launch. It was also useful when a ship was in port out of office hours because the walkie-talkie could be propped on the sailing club bar, and, with my launch standing by off the club, I could time my arrival on board to coincide with the finishing of cargo working.

Later, when I transferred to Mombasa, one of my jobs was to attend to the Zanzibar Government steamer when it made an occasional call. One day it arrived with no fewer than three Russian captains on the bridge. Apparently one

was leaving and giving instruction to two others before he left.

When sailing time came, there was a certain confusion on the bridge and the mate on the fo'c'sle cast off too soon. The ship slithered down the quay and as it was high water and there was a big overhang, the wing of the bridge crashed into a shore crane. Fortunately, the crane did not topple over.

Walkie-talkies were, of course, used on board for the captain to communicate to the chief officer on the fo'c'sle when entering and leaving port. One day, one of our cargo ships was leaving the berth when another arrived and had to anchor off until the berth was clear.

The chief officer of the ship arriving was ordered to let go the anchor. Unfortunately, it was discovered too late that the walkie-talkies on the ship leaving were operative on the same frequency. The chief officer heard the command "Let go" and, thinking that there was an emergency, immediately let go the anchor.

**The pilot blew his whistle for the tug to stop pulling and the strong monsoon wind blew the ship back alongside. That one took a lot of sorting out!**

There were, of course, many other incidents on which I can now look back with amused nostalgia — such as when we ran out of cargo space and put bales of cotton in spare passenger accommodation (no cargo planners in those days); and the time when I was the most unpopular person in the sailing club because one of our ships — a marker in the race — had up-anchored and sailed when only half the yachts had rounded it!

## Cyclone Ahoy!

There was also the occasion when we were warned of an approaching cyclone on a grey and windy day. After having secured lighters, closed godowns, sent out the town crier and prepared for the worst, it occurred to me to ask the harbour master's clerk (the originator of the warning) for its exact location.

"Sir, I am not knowing its location," he said.

"But it must be in the message you received from the Nairobi Met. office," I replied: "Are there any figures at the end of the message?"

"Yes, sir, but I am not knowing what they mean."

"Well, what are the figures?"

"Sir, they are 55E 19N."

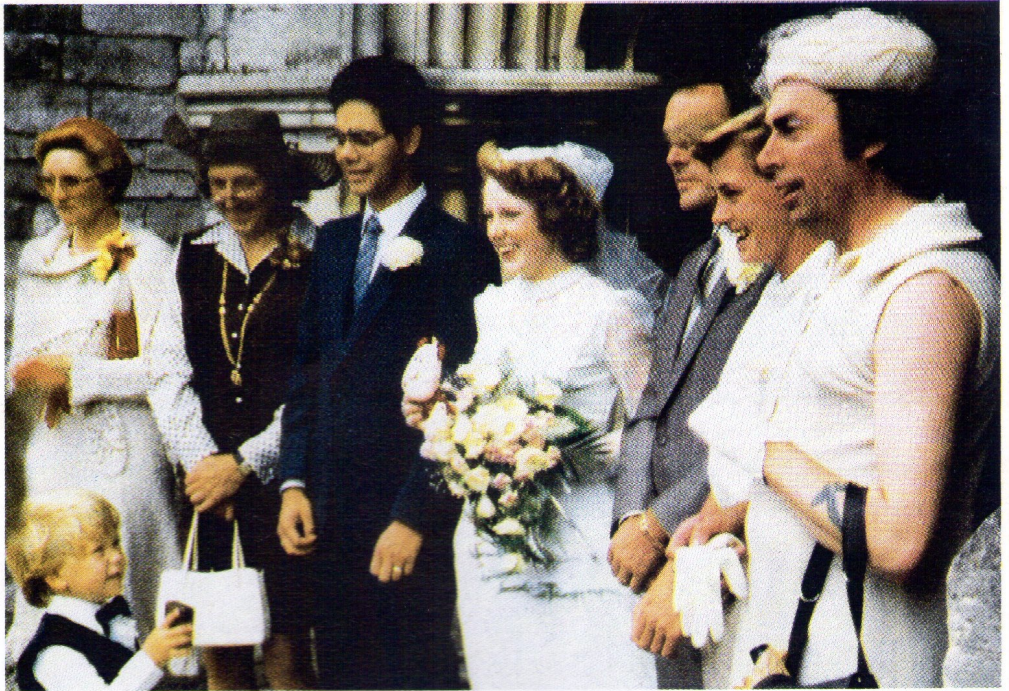
The storm was several hundred miles away near Mauritius. That took some explaining, too. . .

# A sad loss to ACTS

All at ACTS — in Richmond House, where he worked, and throughout the regions — were deeply saddened by the death of Revenue/Current Accounts Supervisor Les Heather.

Liked and respected by all who worked with him and for him, Les made a valuable contribution to the financial aspects of the ACTS operation during the 12 years he was with the company.

Our sympathies go to his widow, Anita, who supported Les stoically during a long illness. He will be missed by us all.



# DESERT RAT TED QUILTS THE ROAD

After eleven years with the ACT Services in the North West, Ted Knight ('Knight of the Road' to his friends) has retired.

He joined the company as a courier in 1972, and later travelled almost a quarter of a million miles in its service. Ex-Desert Rat, ex-meat haulage driver, Ted was so keen to join ACTS that he reported a week early for his first interview!

Physical travel may now be over for him, but since his colleagues gave him a radio capable of world-wide reception, it is doubtful whether he will ever stop 'travelling'. The set was formally presented to him by



## Liverpool News

Regional Manager Ray French. Have a long and happy retirement with Doris, Ted . . .

Once a traveller, always a traveller seems to be the story of ACTS couriers generally in the North West. Ron Savage ex T and J Harrison seagoing staff, has now been joined as a courier by Larry Cray, also ex Merchant Navy.

Ron spends much of his spare time enjoying opera, while Larry is a ball watcher — snooker and foot!

## BEEF AND DISCO DATE

ACT Services North West Region held their annual dinner dance for the first time at the St. Georges Hotel — part of the St. John's Precinct complex — in Liverpool.

After a roast beef dinner, staff and guests enjoyed the alternatives of bar and disco.

## The ladies not for spurning!

No wonder the little fellow in the picture above (foreground, left) looks a bit puzzled. Wouldn't you be bewildered if, just as the wedding picture was about to be taken, two apparently uninvited 'ladies' suddenly barged in and pushed themselves to the front of the group?

It happened at the wedding of Southampton Terminal receptionist/telephonist/typist Gill Warner and Andrew Gerry.

For those unfamiliar with Terminal staff — and their habits! — on the extreme right is Ray Tomlin, Assistant Container Inspector, in white dress and pillbox hat, and second on the left, with the nice legs, Alan Hodgson, Technical Manager.

## FAST CAR GROOM



A fast car fanatic, Bob Whalley, transport assistant with ACTS at Aintree, slowed down long enough to marry Elizabeth Denham at St Andrews Church, Maghull.

## FITNESS NO PROBLEM FOR DENNIS

Keeping fit in retirement should be no problem for Operations department planning engineer Dennis Pavey, whose colleagues gave him this exercise bicycle when he retired.

Dennis joined ACTS in December, 1966, transferring to Southampton when the office was relocated from Fenchurch Street.

At that time, Dennis and wife Tricia decided that the rural life would be all-important to them and bought a house on the outskirts of the New Forest at St Ives, Ringwood. Here, with their two daughters and a son, they became deeply involved with local council and charity work.

Now, when he isn't cycling to keep fit, Dennis can always relax by watching the portable television set given to him by the company and presented by Operations Director Bill Campbell.