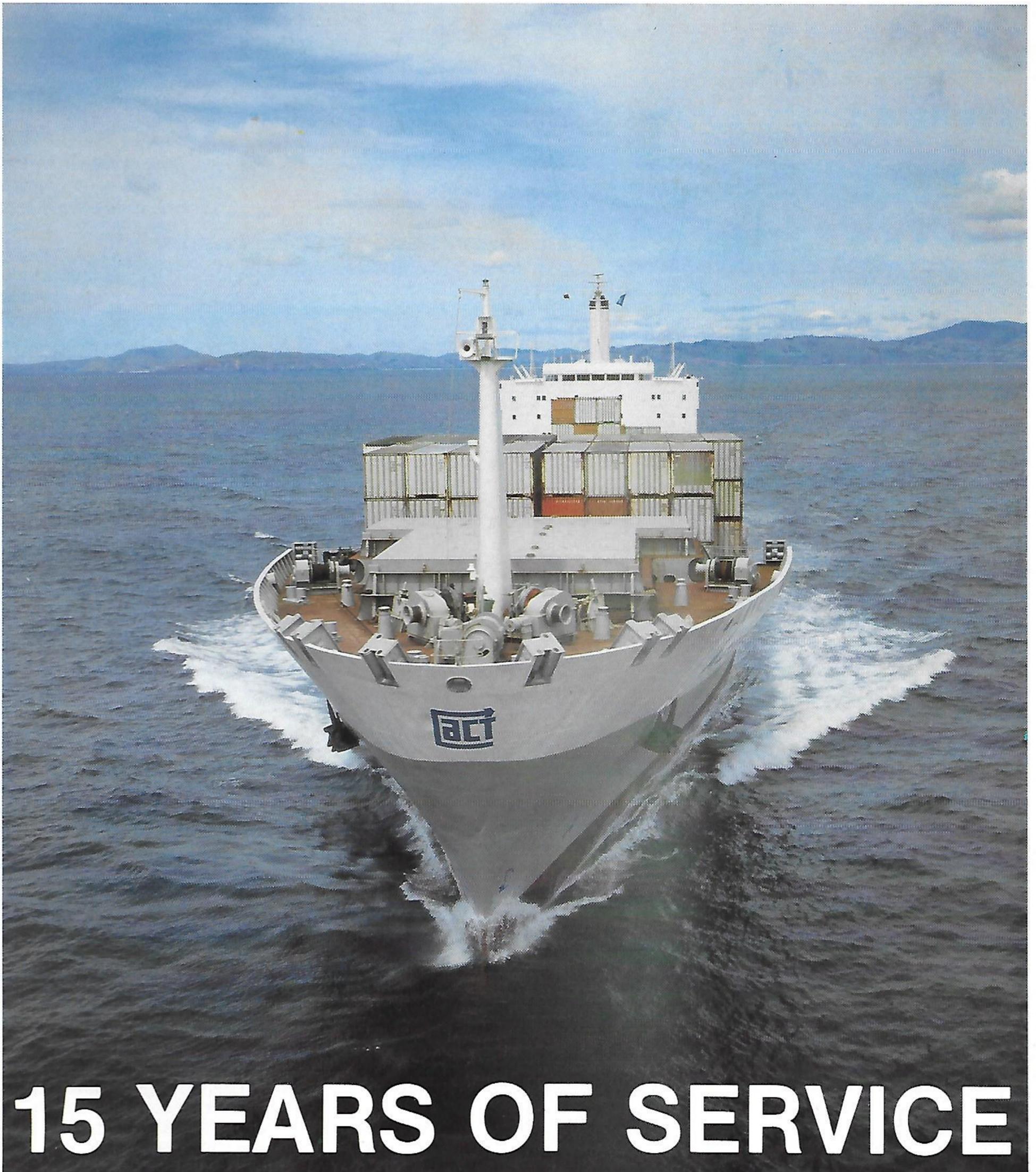


act news

SUMMER 1984



15 YEARS OF SERVICE

REVOLUTIONISING THE SHIPPING TRADE

In 1969 man first walked on the moon and at the same time another giant leap forward — though less spectacular — was taking place: the first ACT(A) ship was arriving in Australia to inaugurate the company's door-to-door container service which was to help revolutionise the shipping trade.

This exciting concept was so new that the idea needed to be explained and shippers convinced about the advantages of the "magic box". Fifteen years later containerisation is an accepted way of life and conventional shipping has all but disappeared from the scene.

It hasn't all been smooth sailing — far from it — but there is no doubt that ACT(A) has been successful and that its emphasis on offering a highly personalised service has paid dividends.

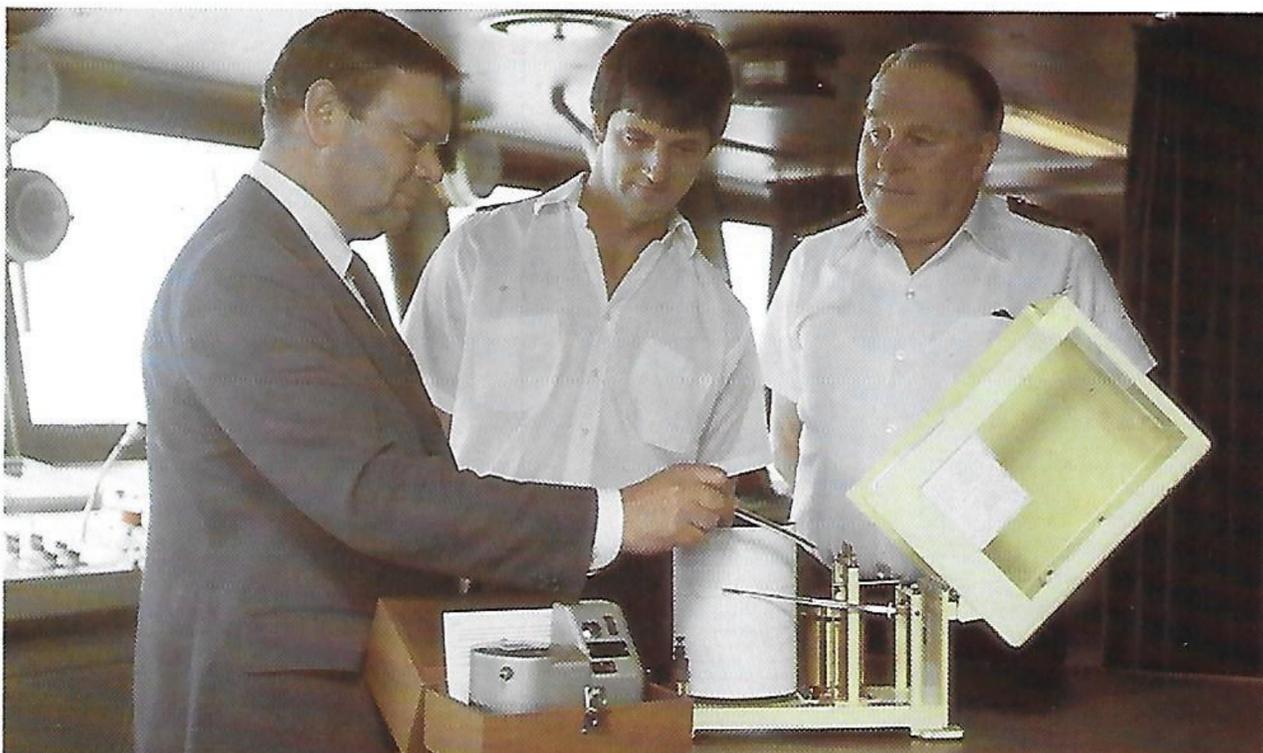
Fifteen years from now the world will be approaching a new century. There will undoubtedly be many changes and the next 15 years will hold great challenges. ACT(A) plans to be at the forefront, meeting these challenges and continuing to offer the highest level of service to its shippers.

Top: The first and the newest ships in the ACT(A)/ANL fleet on the UK/Europe/Australia/New Zealand trade, "ACT 1" and "ACT 7", recently found themselves docked side by side at Rotterdam's ECT Terminal — the "ACT 1" arriving from Australasia and the "ACT 7" on its way out.

Right: The "ACT 1", which made its first trip to Australia in 1969, continues to offer shippers reliable and regular sailings.



KEEPING TABS ON THE WEATHER



Inspecting part of the meteorological recording equipment on the bridge of "ACT 7" are (left to right) Captain C.R. Downes, The Port Meteorological Officer for South-East England; D.G. Robbie, 3rd Officer on "ACT 7"; and Captain D.M. McPhail, Master of "ACT 7".

"ACT 7" has been named one of the six best meteorological observing ships by the Meteorological Office for the third year running and Captain Donald M. McPhail, the ship's Master, has established an enviable record.

Capt. McPhail has received a total of seven annual awards, six of which have been awarded consecutively over the past six years. His contribution to the Met Office goes back a great deal further than that, however, with his first meteorological logbook having been sent in 1948 when he was serving on the "Brisbane Star".

Since that time, the Met Office has received 45 logbooks bearing Capt. McPhail's name of which 18 were classed as "excellent".

This year's award is a copy of the book, "To the Ends of the Earth" by Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Bt., which is the story of the Transglobe Expedition. ACT(A) was one of the sponsors of this historic and successful circumnavigation of the world on its axis.

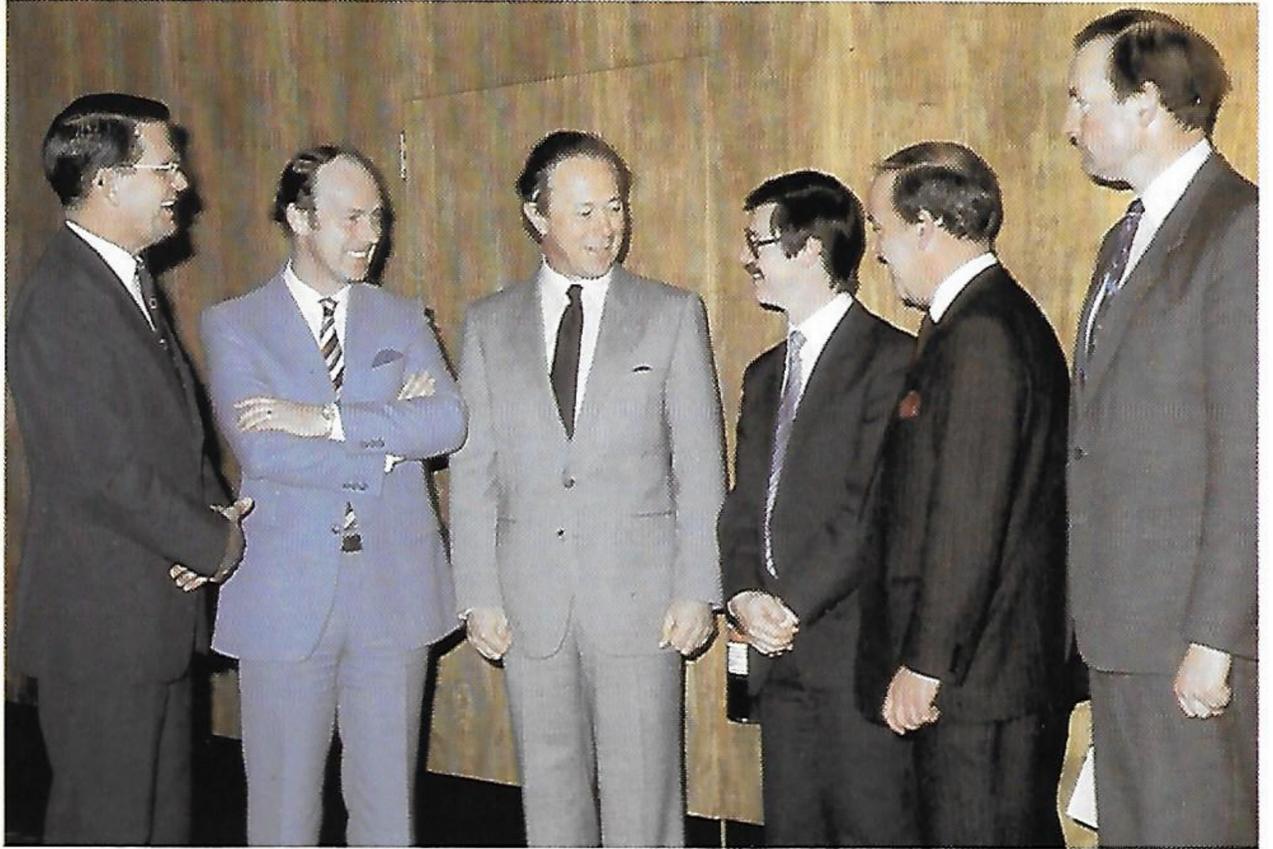
PROVIDING PERSONALISED SERVICE

Communicating to Sell was the theme of ACT(A)'s Sales Conference held near London recently and attended by members of the sales and marketing team from Head Office and regional offices throughout the UK.

Talks and discussions took place on ways of serving customers better; the delegates were told how to communicate more effectively; and there was a general exchange of useful information. Among the speakers was ACT(A)'s Managing Director Alexander Macintosh; Len Fiddock, General Manager, Europe/Australia/New Zealand Service; Commercial Manager Jeff Stoddart; and Ian Weatherston, Financial Director.

Del Jenkins, Director of ACT Services, talked about the future role of the computer in ACT(A) and explained how it would increase efficiency, speed documentation to the shipper and help contain costs.

"We feel that it is very important to have these sales conferences," said Marketing Manager David Haigh, "as they help us to consider new and better ways of providing the personalised service for which ACT(A) has been known over the years."



Discussing some of the points raised during the Sales Conference during a tea break are (left to right) Peter Pike, ACT(A)'s Director of Operations; Noël Kent, Sales/Marketing Manager of Ellerman City Liners; Alexander Macintosh, Managing Director of ACT(A); David Haigh, Marketing Manager of ACT(A) and Chairman of the Conference; Del Jenkins, Director and Head of Management Services of ACT Services; and Michael Cartwright, Director of Commercial Planning, ACT(A).

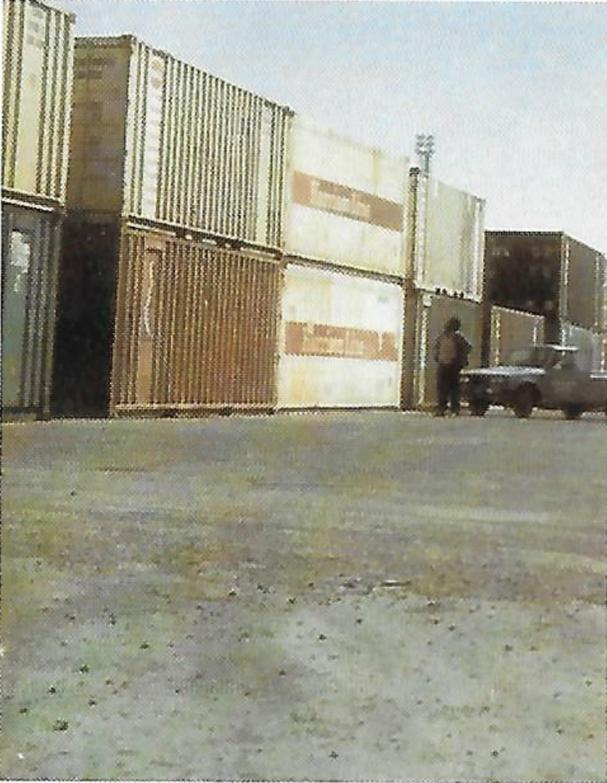


Delegates to the ACT(A) Sales Conference are photographed during a brief rest period.

LONG STANDING SERVICE TO THE SUDAN

Should you ship your goods to the Sudan by container? The answer to this question in 1984 is undoubtedly yes.

Containerisation has been shown not only in terms of the cost and time-saving to be more effective than conventional means, but also in terms of convenience to both shipper and consignee. Pioneers of containerisation to the Sudan are Ellerman City Liners, the Harrison Line (both serving within the BEACON consortium) and Cunard, all of whom have long established commitments to the trade and contacts second to none.



Containerloads of imports in the Marshalling Yard at Port Sudan.

The Harrison Service began as early as 1910 with the sailing of the SS "Traveller" from the UK. The increase in demand for British exports together with the need to transport cotton grown in the Nile valley to the mills of Lancashire meant that a regular conventional service was set up, a service which continued until the advent of containerisation in 1980.

Cunard-Brocklebank, who also had been serving Port Sudan with a conventional service for over 30 years, were keen to offer the benefits of a containerisation service and in November 1980 the container ship "Hodeidah Crown" made its first call from the North Continent to Port Sudan.

Since these early days, very large numbers of containers have been moved through the port and more recently many have been undergoing the journey to Khartoum. The port itself has made significant developments with facilities still improving all the time.

The two berths suitable for container ships are almost constantly in use and another two container berths and a ro-ro berth are near completion; a large container park is also under construction. All BEACON and C.A.M.E.L. vessels are self-sustaining and are capable of a very swift turnaround.



Members of the team of Gezira, C.A.M.E.L.'s agents in the Sudan (left to right) Messrs. Abbas, Saddig, Khidder and Saad Osman Saad with Alasdair MacVean, C.A.M.E.L. General Manager.

The major imports to the Sudan are foodstuffs, construction equipment and agricultural machinery while exports include ground nuts, gum Arabic, cotton and sennapods.

One of the most important events of the Sudanese businessman's year is the International Fair of Khartoum,

which has played an important role in promoting trade exchange and also offers the opportunity for businessmen to meet. The Department of Fairs was established as long ago as 1956 and to date 135 countries and more than 6,000 international and local companies have participated.



On its arrival at Port Sudan, the M.V. "Barrister" begins unloading operations at Berth 15, South Quays. The port has made significant advances and facilities are continuing to improve.

C.A.M.E.L.'S GREEK CONNECTION

When Graham Lawtey, C.A.M.E.L.'s Senior Ships' Planner, visited Piraeus at the beginning of April he had two purposes in mind.

Firstly, C.A.M.E.L.'s operations staff visit all the ports which the company serves on a regular basis to make sure they are up-to-date with all developments in the port infrastructure and secondly, to hold discussions and make contact with their agents to ensure that C.A.M.E.L. ships are planned with maximum efficiency. In Piraeus the Line's agents are Gold Marine.

Graham's visit was timed to coincide with the arrival of the 650 TEU "Aldebaran", which was discharging North European cargo in Piraeus and loading boxes for all the Red Sea ports served — Aqaba, Hodeidah, Jeddah and Port Sudan.

Cargoes carried from Europe to Greece are predominantly spirits, foodstuffs, chemicals and spare parts. C.A.M.E.L. has been calling regularly at Piraeus twice a month for three years and since the inception of the service the same agency has been responsible for representing the Line.

Gold Marine is a small, personal

company owned by Elias Padazopoulos, who handles the commercial and sales activities, and George Petralis, who is responsible for finance, container leasing and the two vessels that Gold Marine themselves own. The staff of eight based in Piraeus ensure that shippers and consignees alike get regular contact and swift help with any problems they may encounter or any

queries they may have.

During his visit, as well as supervising the planning and loading of the "Aldebaran", Graham Lawtey had discussions on documentation and equipment supply, visited some customers and even found himself in the middle of an antiques auction for which C.A.M.E.L. carried all the exhibits.



C.A.M.E.L.'s "Aldebaran" loading at Piraeus.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO JEDDAH

While on separate visits to the Middle East, two members of the C.A.M.E.L. team from London Head Office met at the company's villa in Jeddah and took the opportunity to compare notes and hold discussions with the Jeddah Office staff.

John Joyce, Managing Director of Cunard-Brocklebank, and Bob Winlo, Operations Manager of C.A.M.E.L., received a briefing from the Jeddah team on the present situation in Saudi Arabia and talked about how best to cater for the many and varied requirements of the Line's customers there.

In the photograph taken outside the villa are (left to right) Trace Barnes, C.A.M.E.L.'s Middle East Manager; Abdul Rachman, Jeddah Co-ordinator; Najeeb Karamat Ali, C.A.M.E.L. Salesman; John Joyce, Managing Director, Cunard-Brocklebank; Bob Winlo, C.A.M.E.L. Operations Manager; and Rasheed Kahn, Office Co-ordinator.



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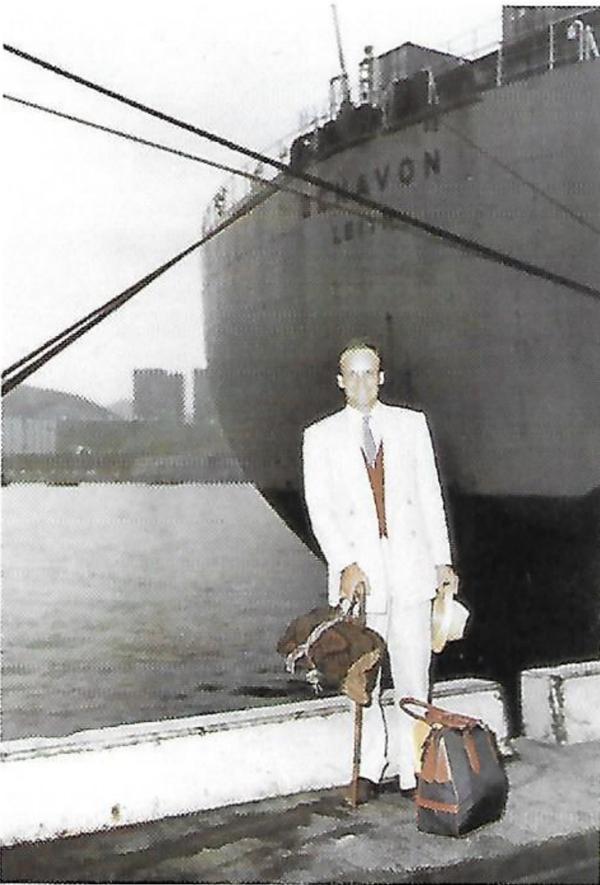
AROUND THE WORLD IN 78 DAYS

By Nicholas Coleridge

Six months ago I was at a dinner party in London when someone at the other end of the table started talking about Jules Verne's classic book, "Around the World in Eighty Days".

"Nowadays, of course, you could do the same route in about 30 days," he was saying.

"What nonsense!" retorted his neighbour. "If anything, it would take longer than in the last century — all those passenger ships have stopped sailing."



Nicholas Coleridge is shown on arrival at Hong Kong with BLC's "Benavon", the largest of ten ships on which he travelled during his voyage.

"I wouldn't be surprised if it took a hundred days," opined a third voice. "And even then you'd have to cover an average of 350 miles a day, and you'd be bound to get bogged down in Sudan and Djibouti."

"I'd forgotten Phileas Fogg went to Africa. I haven't read the book for years."

I can't remember what it was I said, but somehow or other, by the time we'd finished the pudding, I'd recklessly agreed to have a crack at the celebrated challenge myself: that it is possible to circumnavigate the globe in 80 days or less — that is, 1920 hours or 115,200 minutes.

Three months later, on January 9th, 1984, I would set off from the library of the Reform Club in Pall Mall on a hectic race in Phileas Fogg's footsteps, zig-zagging the Tropic of Capricorn, on a mission which could be compromised by a single sacred cow on the line. Furthermore, I would travel only by ship, train, taxi, dhow, rickshaw, elephant and camel.

The following week I suggested the idea of a newspaper series to the editor of the *London Standard*, for whom I usually write a weekly metropolitan column, and also to the publishers William Heinemann. Possibly because they were both anxious to see the back of me, it was agreed that I should set off at the earliest opportunity and file reports to the paper while writing a book about the 30,000 mile journey.

Only then, when it was already too late to change my mind, did I manage to track down a copy of Verne's story; not an easy task since it is temporarily out of print and only available from Harrods' Children's Library. Then I transposed Fogg's route from the book to



The author (left) is wished "Good luck and Godspeed" by Captain William Cowie, Master of the "Benavon", which brought him from Singapore to Hong Kong on his trip around the world.

the useful little map in the back of my pocket diary.

It did not look very challenging, being little more than six inches across. The Far East seemed especially simple being mostly lost down the spine of the diary, where no cuticle could follow.

When I transferred the route to an atlas, however, I felt a creeping apprehension. Whole pages of ocean, coloured turquoise blue with barely an island to relieve the monotony, suddenly loomed between Djibouti and Bombay. Even more worryingly, Phileas Fogg's route is frequently at odds with conventional shipping lanes, so you are liable to get marooned in the back of beyond without any forwarding plan.

Five stretches seemed especially difficult: the Suez Canal and down the Red Sea from Port Said to Port Sudan; across East Africa from Port Sudan to Djibouti and thence to India; across the Bay of Bengal from Madras to Singapore; across the North Pacific from

Honolulu to San Francisco and — rather to my surprise — from Singapore across the South China Sea to Hong Kong.

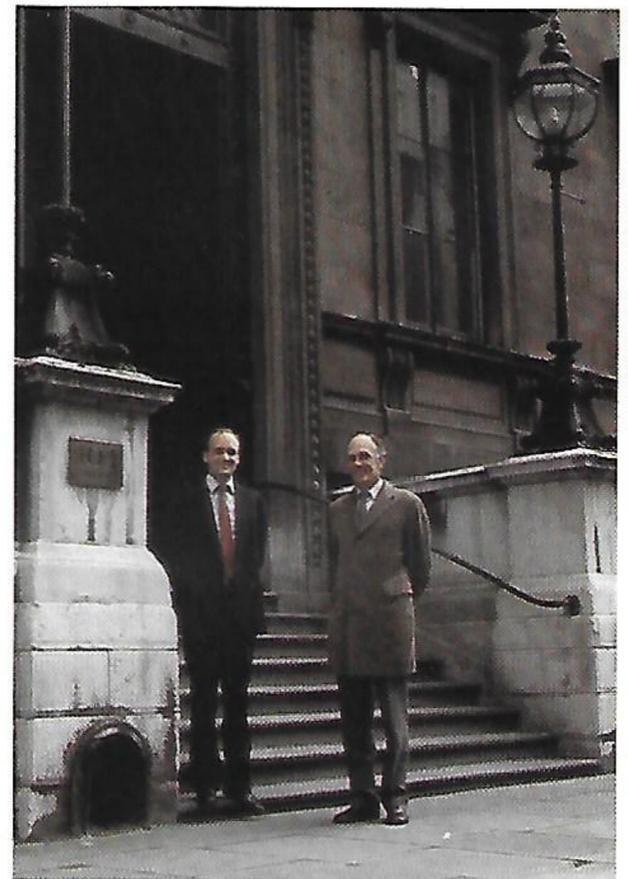
Few passenger ships plied any of these routes and all of them are compulsory pit stops on the Phileas Fogg itinerary. The only one with a regular passenger service is from Madras to Singapore (which runs every 21 days), so I decided to buy my ticket for this in advance and see whether any cargo ships could help inbetween.

In two cases they could: Cunard's "Aqaba Crown" from Port Said to Port Sudan and Ben Line's containership, "Benavon", from Singapore to Hong Kong.

Little did I realise when I gratefully accepted their offers of a hitch-hike that my sanity was also at stake. My short spells aboard these container vessels were the only moments of rest on an otherwise non-stop sprint through 20 countries and five continents at an average speed of 375 miles per day.

Shortly before setting off, I had a white tropical suit made up in Dover Street in London, with zipped pockets cunningly concealed in the lining for passport and money. I also carried a lethal maplewood swordstick with a 12-inch blade, which I had a premonition would cause me endless problems at every frontier.

Interestingly enough, my deadly



Discussing the exciting and hectic circumnavigation of the world in 78 days, in front of London's Reform Club on Pall Mall where it all started and ended — as in Jules Verne's book — are the protagonist of the adventure, Nicholas Coleridge (left), and Dennis Goodchild of Killick Martin.



A map of the route taken by Nicholas Coleridge on his epic voyage around the world following in the footsteps of Jules Verne's Phileas Fogg. Coleridge managed to beat the 80 days by some 30 hours in spite of all the difficulties encountered.

blade was only once detected through 40 different customs posts — in Madras, where the duty officer was only too happy to turn a blind eye in return for five rupees. The only occasion on which the swordstick was actually used was for braising emergency kebabs over a cigarette lighter, or for spearing dropped railway tickets.

My final piece of kit was a Victorian carpet bag held together with two dozen bronze studs, one of which fell out at every port until the bag finally expired at Felixstowe on my 78th day.

My last act before departing was to compute the odds on my success. Thomas Cook studied the route and reckoned it would take 120 days, allowing a small margin for illness and red tape. Ladbrokes gave me 2-1 against. There had been two previous cracks at the Phileas Fogg race, both of which backfired.

The first, by the French writer Jean Cocteau in 1958 petered out when he discovered the pleasures of Malaysian opium dens. The second, by the American humorist S.J. Perelman, took 98 days, mostly spent in dawdling over highballs on hotel terraces.

Shipping experts will appreciate how the route, superficially simple, in fact requires precision planning. Several times on the journey I had to make on-

the-spot amendments; for instance, when my Sudanese taxi broke down in a sandstorm, and the train across India ran 11 hours late.

In the event, my itinerary was as follows: train from London to Paris; sleeper from Paris to Brindisi; ferry to Patras; taxi across Greece to Piraeus; Egyptian passenger ship to Alexandria; taxi across Northern Egypt to Port Said in time to catch the "Aqaba Crown" to Port Sudan via Jeddah; taxi for 820 miles across Southern Sudan and Ethiopia's Eritrean war zone to Djibouti; Arab dhow for 6½ days across the Arabian Sea to Bombay; train across India to Madras, allowing seven minutes to spare before sailing to Singapore.

In Singapore I had a slight hiatus for resting up at Raffles Hotel until the "Benavon" whisked me to Hong Kong. From then on it was a series of long sweeps via Yokohama and Honolulu by freighter and yacht to San Francisco. The train across America takes 101 hours, permitting a three-hour margin of error before re-crossing the Atlantic.

By these means I returned to the library of the Reform Club on the evening of the 78th day, with a little under 30 hours to spare.

Altogether I travelled on ten different ships, of which the "Benavon" was the

largest and the 100-foot motorised Arab dhow, the "Socotra", was the smallest. The "Socotra" was smuggling qat — the narcotic leaf so widespread in Djibouti and the Yemen — to expatriate Arabs in India as well as illegal cheetah skins slipped out of Kenya.

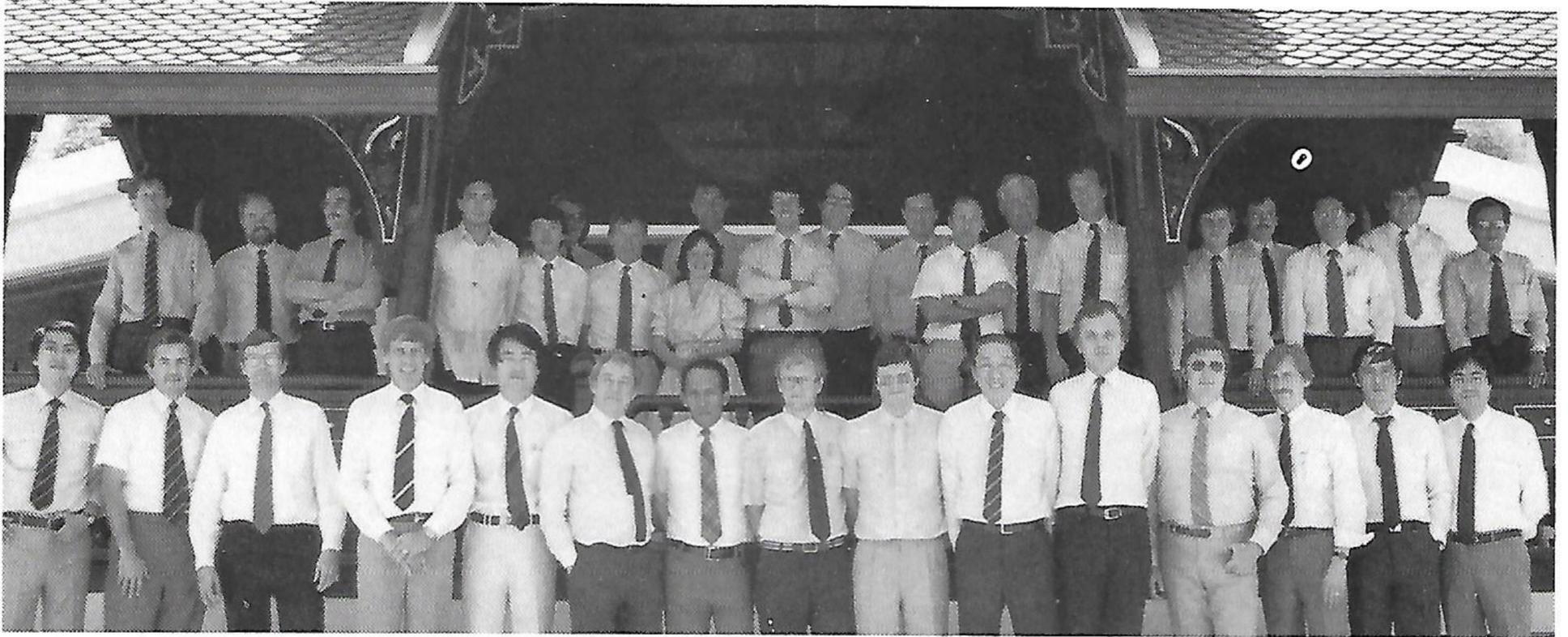
The "Benavon", by contrast, was transporting a large consignment of carriages for the Hong Kong underground system.

Now I am back in London, resuming my humdrum column in the *Standard*, while my book of the journey, "Around the World in 78 Days"* is rolling through the presses. But I often think, as I idly stare at the huge world map on the wall of the newspaper office, of all the ships I sailed on, still steaming around the world.

Like all inveterate landlubbers, I was surprised (and impressed) by the non-stop schedule of modern container-ships. Vaguely, I had imagined that they sailed only three or four times a year, spending several days at each port for unloading. Now I know that their schedule is rather more reliable than the Number 19 bus from Piccadilly to Fleet Street.

*To be published July 1st by Heinemann, £9.95, 250 pages, 24 illustrations.

WHEN WEST MET EAST IN BANGKOK



East is East and West went East when BLC specialist European marketers met in Bangkok with their Eastern marketing colleagues recently.

BLC strategy, container service performance, marketing methods and future business trends were among the many topics discussed at the meeting which was chaired by Mr. Bill Thomson, Marketing Director of BLC.

The 35 delegates met in the Conference Room of the Bangkok Hilton and during one of the breaks a photograph was taken at the Thai

Pavilion in the hotel grounds. In the photograph are back row (left to right) Roger Miall, Tokyo; Peter Fischer, Hamburg; Dermot Taylor, Seoul; Ricky Delgado, Manila; Bobby Chua, Manila; George Allan, London; Tom Clark, Edinburgh; Freddie Kramer, Hamburg; Lynne Cudworth, Edinburgh; Ian Roper, Taipei; Donald McCulloch, Edinburgh; Bill Thomson, Edinburgh; Rod Ramsay, Jakarta; Kees van den Boer, Rotterdam; Chris Brightman, Ben Line Singapore; John Webb, London; James Wannell, Paris; Takazo Iigaki, Tokyo; James

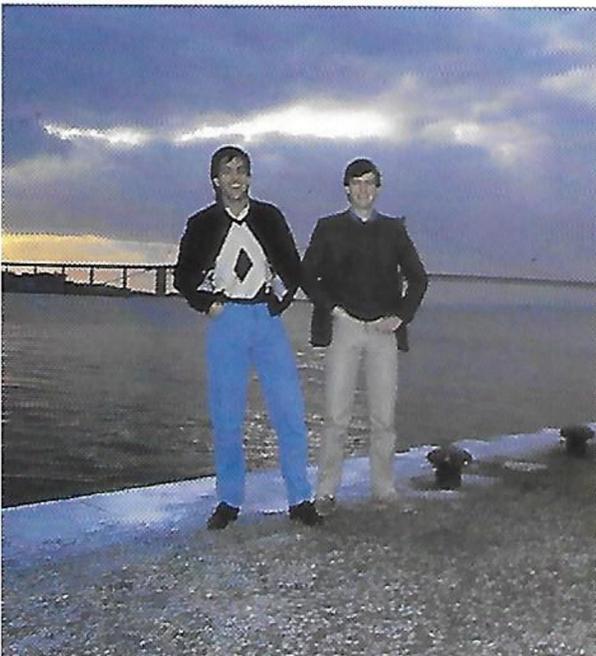
Mattinson, Singapore; and Sudhisakdi Manibhandu, Bangkok.

Front row (left to right) Henry Chue, Taipei; Stuart Peacock, Hong Kong; David Fergus, Hong Kong; Norman MacDonald, Bangkok; B.J. Cho, Seoul; Bob Tookey, London; Sid Soemarno, Jakarta; Jens Falck-Jensen, Copenhagen; Rudy Verhoeven, Antwerp; Peter Siy, Manila; David Keith-Welsh, Hong Kong; Stewart Forbes, Petaling Jaya; Jan van der Waarden, Rotterdam; Koh Chee Hui, Petaling Jaya; and Hon Lam, Hong Kong.

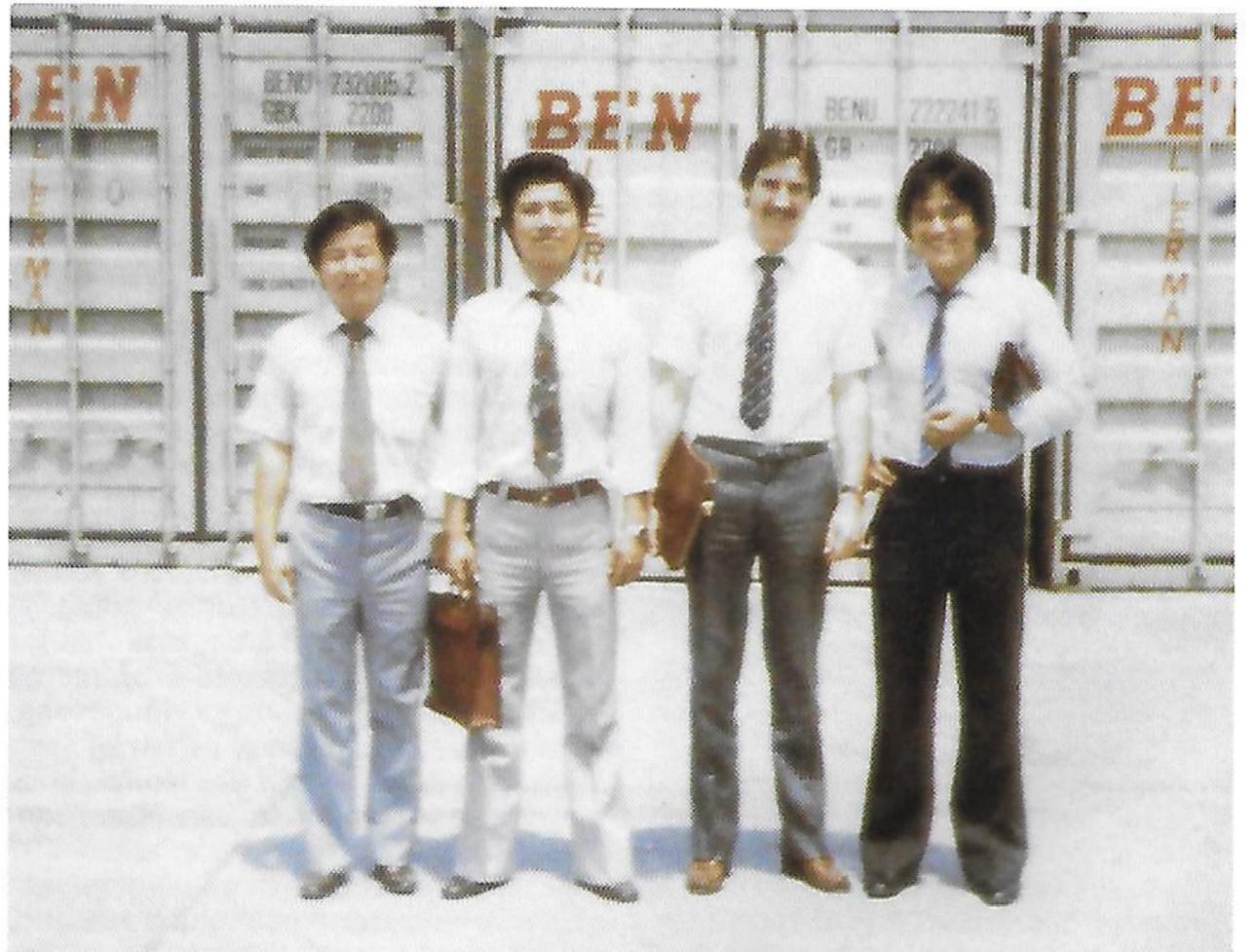
GERMAN VISITOR

Volker Bloeck of Menzells, BLC's agents in Hamburg (West Germany), spent a week with Killicks in London and a week in Edinburgh recently learning more about the BLC and Ben Ocean marketing and container operations.

Volker, who works in Menzell's East-bound Marketing Department, was photographed during his visit to Scotland with Nigel Barry (right) of BLC's Marketing Department and the Forth Road Bridge can be seen in the background.



MARKETEER EXTENDS TERRITORY



Paul Brown of Killick Martin (Birmingham) Limited, who normally canvasses in the East Midlands for BLC, extended his canvassing territory when he called on BLC customers in Malaysia, Taiwan, The Philippines, Hong Kong and Singapore. In the photograph Paul Brown with (left to right) Arthur Lin, Howard Wu and Norman Lee of Tait & Co., BLC agents in Taiwan.

IN THE BAG

Killick Martin staff seek out BLC customers anywhere they can find them and sometimes that is in unusual places.

When Graham White of Llewelyn Wynne, old established London importers, took part recently in a Game Conservancy Triathlon, Killick Martin's Dennis Goodchild was right behind him and "showing the flag" for BLC. Llewelyn Wynne, whose imports include clothing and camping equipment from the Far East, are long-time supporters of BLC.

The Triathlon was held at Dunsfold on the Surrey-Sussex Border and is a popular event in which the competition consists of three elements: a sporting clay pigeon shoot, fly casting and a gundog test which includes retrieving from water.

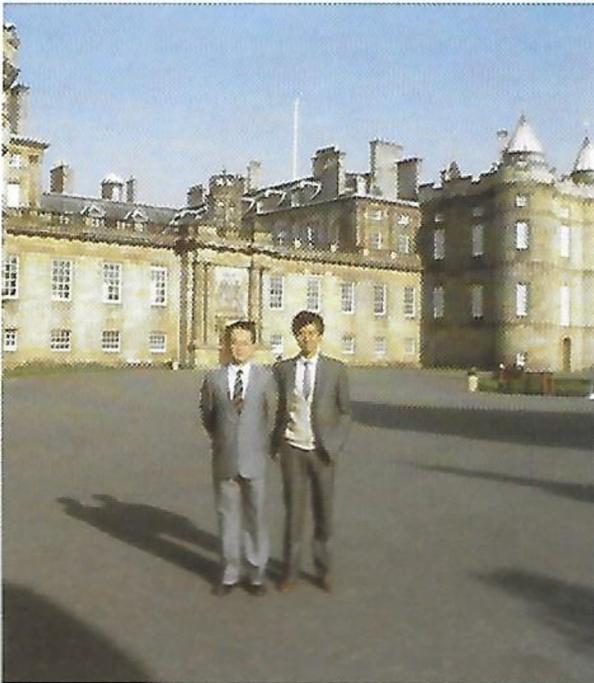


Comparing notes during the Triathlon were Graham White (left) of Llewelyn Wynne and his wife Lucia (right) with Dennis Goodchild of Killick Martin and his wife Prue (left foreground). "That was one (customer) that didn't get away," says Goodchild.

JAPANESE APPOINTMENT

Harushige Mishida has been appointed Container Manager for BLC in Japan, based in Tokyo.

He visited BLC agents and offices in Europe recently to learn more about container control and its computer applications. During Mishida-san's visit to the Edinburgh Head Office, he took time off to do some sightseeing and was photographed at Holyrood Palace along with Chan Wang (right) from the Hong Kong office who is currently undergoing an extended training period in Edinburgh.



MARKETEER BRIEFED

Stephen Fung (right) of BLC's Hong Kong office was briefed by Lynne Cudworth of the BLC Marketing Department when he called at the Edinburgh Office of Ben Line during a recent business tour of Europe. Donald McCulloch (standing), Marketing Manager of BLC, lent his experience to the proceedings.



MEETING CUSTOMERS IN HONG KONG



Mr. Bob Tookey, Director of Killick Martin and Company Limited, BLC's principal agents in the UK, visited Hong Kong recently to talk to customers and hold discussions with office staff there. The photograph shows Mr. Tookey (right) during a Reception given for him to meet shippers and with him are (left to right) Mr. Lam Hon Wing of BLC's Westbound Marketing Department, Mr. Eddie Tse of Eddie Tse (HK) Limited, and Mrs. Tse.

HELPING MAKE THE SEAS SAFER

When it was first proposed that a specialised agency of the United Nations be set up to deal solely with maritime affairs, it was envisaged that its main concern would be to evolve machinery to improve safety at sea.

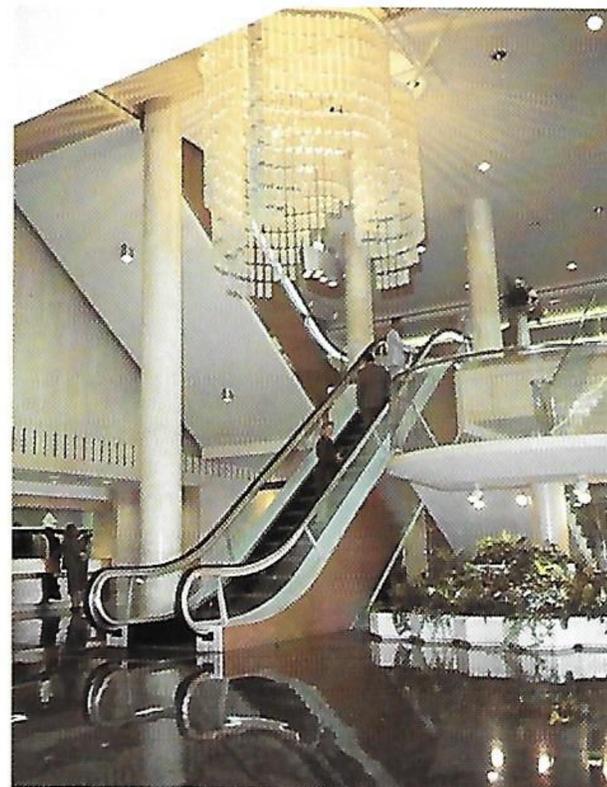
Today the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has a Secretariat with a staff of 270; 125 member countries; and deals with such diverse matters as marine pollution, carriage of dangerous goods, ship design and equipment, bulk chemicals, containers and cargoes, safety of navigation, life-saving appliances, fire protection and many others.

The IMO, which was called the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation (IMCO) until May 1982 when its name was changed, is the only United Nations specialised agency

been one of the most dangerous of occupations and in the second place, because of the international nature of the shipping industry, it had long been recognised that action to improve safety in shipping operations would be more effective if carried out at an international level rather than by individual countries acting unilaterally and without co-ordination with others.

Although a number of important international agreements had already been adopted, many States agreed that there was the need for a permanent body which would be able to co-ordinate and promote further measures on a more continuing basis.

The Governing body of the IMO is the Assembly, which meets once every two years and consists of all the Member States. In the period between the ses-



One corner of the magnificent entrance hall of the new £46 million IMO headquarters in London which was opened last year by Her Majesty The Queen.



Partial view of the main Conference Room at IMO headquarters which has been prepared for the General Assembly that meets every two years. The hall is equipped with the most modern facilities and the Public Gallery can be seen at the rear of the photograph.

to have its headquarters in Britain. It moved into a spacious new £46 million building on London's Albert Embankment near Lambeth Bridge (and not far from the Houses of Parliament), which was officially opened by Her Majesty The Queen last year.

The United Nations Maritime Conference of 1948 adopted the Convention establishing IMO as the first body devoted exclusively to maritime matters; however, it was ten years before the Convention was adopted and entered into force. Now, over 25 years later, member nations have come to rely more and more on this permanent body to co-ordinate and promote measures on a continuing basis relating to the many maritime questions and problems that arise.

The original basis for the proposal to establish IMO — safety at sea — was understandable for two main reasons: in the first place, seafaring has always

sions of the Assembly a Council exercises the functions of the Assembly in running the affairs of the Organisation.

The IMO's technical work is carried out by a number of Committees, the most senior of which is the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). Another very important committee is the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), which deals with the Organisation's anti-marine pollution activities. Because of the legal issues involved in much of its work, the IMO also has a Legal Committee. The MSC, MEPC and Legal Committees are all recognised by the IMO Convention.

In order to achieve its objectives IMO has, in the last 20 years, promoted the adoption of 27 Conventions and Protocols and adopted a number of Codes and Recommendations on various matters relating to maritime safety and prevention of pollution.

The initial work on a Convention is

normally done by a Committee or Subcommittee; then a draft instrument is produced which is submitted to a Conference to which delegations from all States within the United Nations system — including States which may not be IMO Members — are invited. The

Dangerous Goods

One half of all goods shipped can be regarded as dangerous in some way or other.

This problem was recognised when IMO was created and it developed a special code in conjunction with the United Nations and other bodies to deal with the shipment of dangerous goods, to comply with Chapter 7 of the SOLAS Convention.

This code is reviewed regularly and there have been more than 20 amendments. Thousands of items are listed and these are divided into nine different classes.

The code gives information on stowage of goods; what to do if anything goes wrong, e.g. how to treat fires depending on what material is involved; recommendations on how to store dangerous goods on shore, etc.

Conference adopts a final text which is submitted to Governments for ratification.

At the first conference organised by IMO in 1960 a new "International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea" was adopted and came into force in 1965, covering a wide range of measures designed to improve the safety of shipping. This Safety of Life

at Sea Convention — known as the SOLAS Convention for short — became the basic international instrument dealing with matters of maritime safety and in response to new developments it was amended several times.

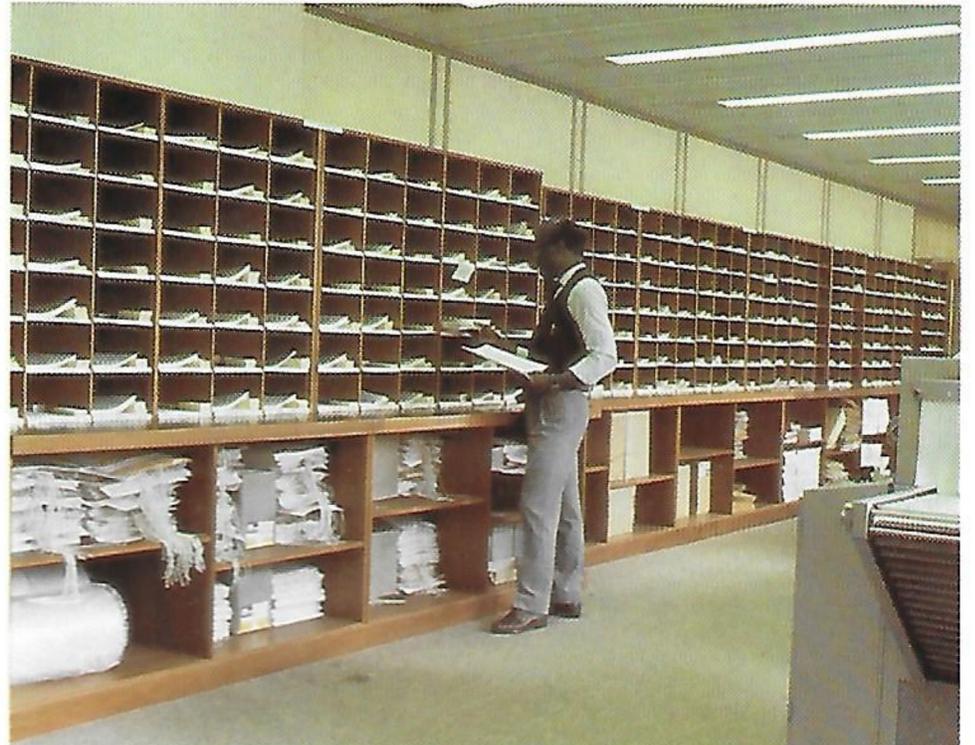
Another conference was convened in 1974 to adopt a new SOLAS convention incorporating a series of amendments, which came into force on May 25th, 1980.

Another convention adopted by IMO in 1972 dealt with the subject of containers. These had by then become an important feature of international maritime trade, and the Convention was designed not only to facilitate this trade by providing uniform international regulations, but also to maintain a high level of safety in the carriage of containers by providing generally acceptable test procedures and related strength requirements. The Convention entered into force in 1977.

The fact that such a Convention was considered necessary was an indica-



A view from the top... of the IMO headquarters building on London's Albert Embankment near Lambeth Bridge. A few of the more than one hundred flags which are flown for the General Assembly can be seen and the Houses of Parliament are in the background.



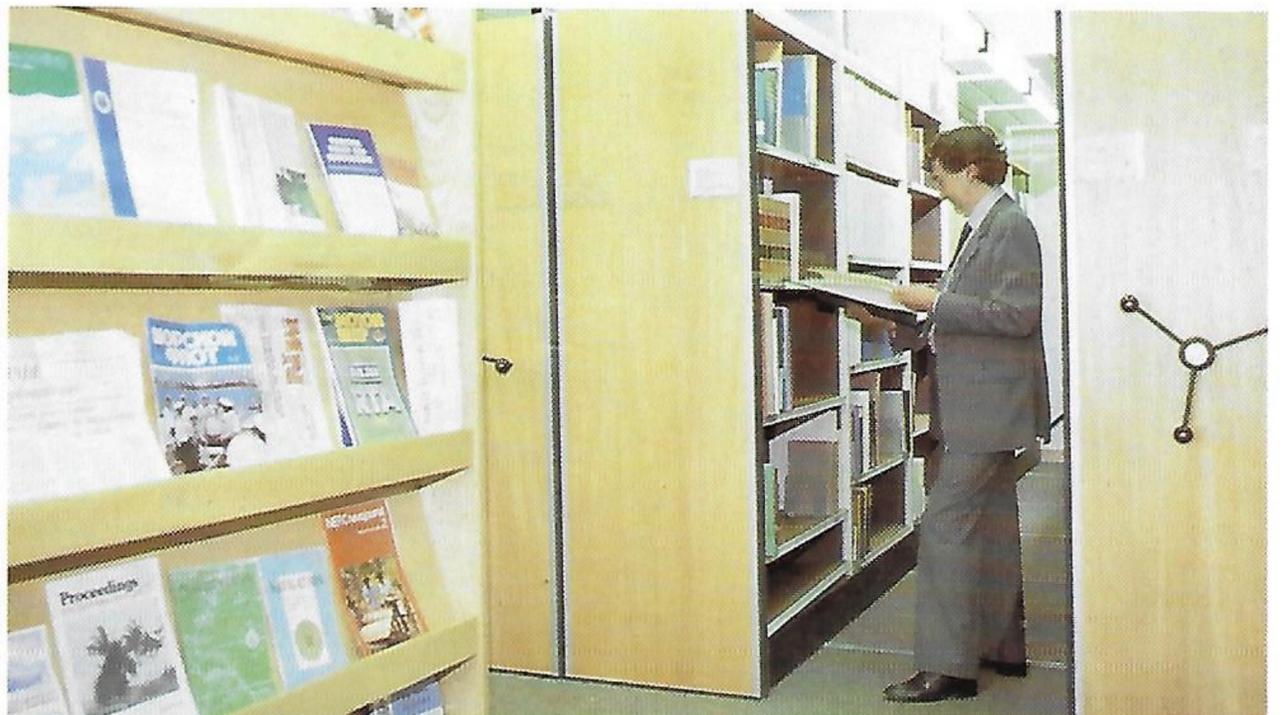
Behind the scenes... a hard-working and dedicated staff help to keep the wheels of the organisation turning smoothly. In the photograph at left sophisticated electronic equipment helps locate quickly one of the thousands of files which must be maintained for immediate use and in the photo right a report is being distributed in the several official languages used by the IMO.

tion of the rate of change in shipping. After all, containers had scarcely been invented when IMO came into existence.

Over the years IMO has continually evolved to meet changing conditions and requirements. Its success has been recognised by the international maritime community, especially in the areas of maritime safety and the prevention of marine pollution.

There is no question that an enormous amount of work remains to be done. The role of IMO as the forum for the international shipping community is, if anything, even more important today than it has been in the past.

The organisation's achievements to date have been as a result of the goodwill and determined efforts of the international community. The struggle for safer shipping and cleaner oceans goes on and IMO will continue to play its role in this continuing endeavour.



The main IMO library has thousands of reference books, magazines and publications available. It is equipped with a space-saving system which allows the user to open the relevant area with the turn of a handle and he can consult the book or take out those he needs.

CONFERENCES — THE BIG RIP OFF?

Suggestions that shipping conferences are monopolies that indulge in "ripping off" practices have been strenuously denied by Mr. Alexander Macintosh, Managing Director of ACT(A).

Speaking at the Victoria (Australia) Branch of the International Cargo Handling and Co-ordinating Association (ICHCA), he said that conferences were essential to growth by providing price stability, continuity of service and the flexibility sought by shippers.

"There is one compelling reason why conferences are not out-of-date. That reason is that it enables you to achieve the lowest unit cost available," Mr. Macintosh stated. To offer this competitive advantage means having ships of large enough size to be economic but which are still not so big that the service they provide is too infrequent to be attractive to customers.

RATE OF FREIGHT

"The only way you can operate a big enough ship with a low unit cost and keep it full is to work together with other people in a rationalised conference service, where you co-operate with other shipowners to provide the right service, efficiently, and at the right rate of freight," he told ICHCA members.

The conference system is under fire from critics who claim it curtails free competition, encourages inefficiency and reduces opportunities for entrepreneurial activity, Mr. Macintosh said. He believed none of this was true. However, he said it was important to



ALEXANDER MACINTOSH

consider what today's shippers required.

"Shippers want price stability and that means knowing that the price is not going up. They must be able to market their products, build up a sales and spare parts organisation and try to promise their customers prices and supplies that can be relied upon from year to year.

"If you have set a business up and then the freight rate doubles, due to instability, the whole project may suffer at the hands of competitors importing from different areas.

"Price stability is very important to those who are involved in marketing. It is essential to those, such as primary producers, who are selling forward. Shippers also need the sort of help from conferences that include promotional rates to help them get started or overcome a temporary problem," he pointed out.

Mr. Macintosh asked ICHCA members to consider the factors that influence shipping companies when they looked at conference options. "They have to consider the cyclical nature of shipping, not only the liner trades, but particularly the bulk trades where rates can fluctuate.

"These days the bulk trades' rates can flow into the liner trades through the former's ability to become a container carrier! This can happen much more quickly than it could in the past, so as a liner shipowner, life is potentially more hazardous than it was," he emphasised.

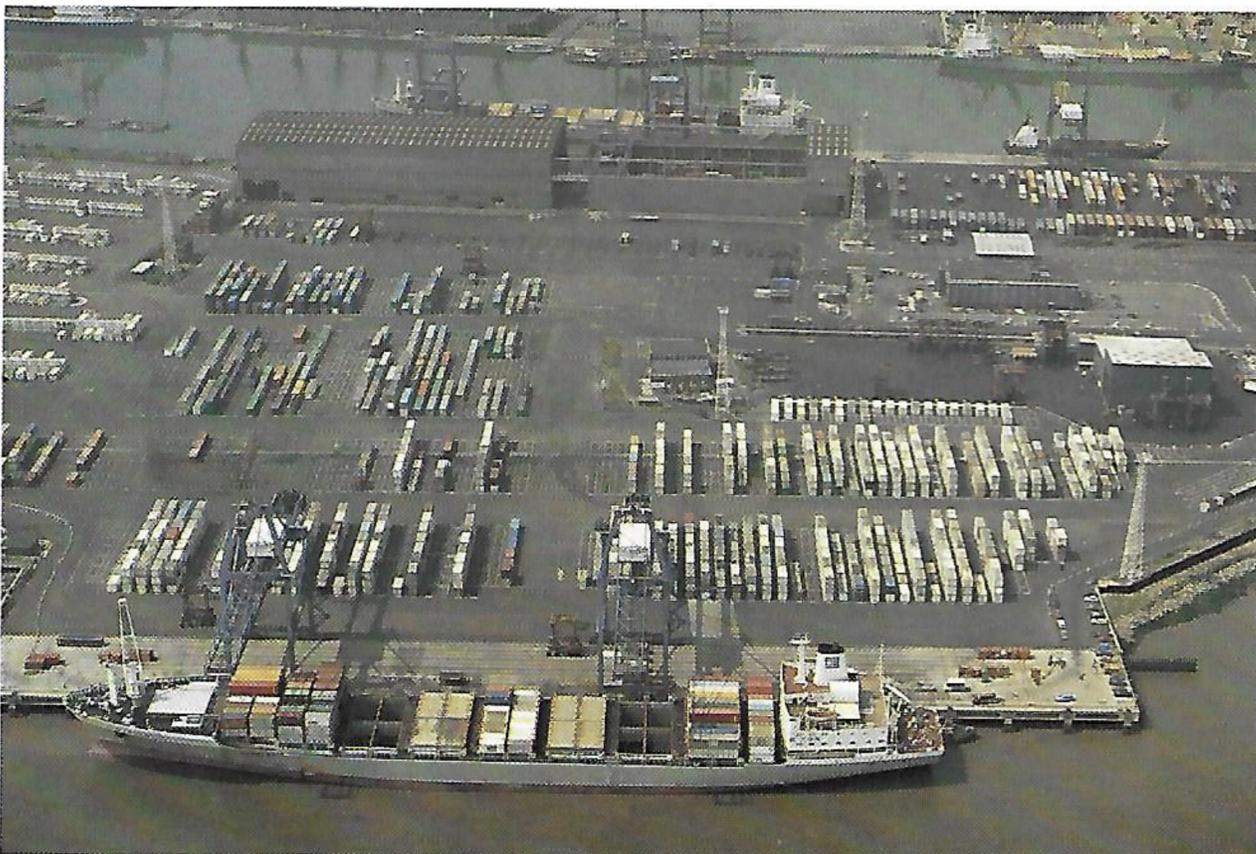
Shipping companies had to consider a great many risks before investing in ships specially designed for conference environment and which would be required to provide an acceptable return for upwards of 20 years, Mr. Macintosh explained. He said that companies may be forced from time to time to take a marginal approach to pricing; they were bound to commitments to a range of customers and customer groups and needed to weigh up what governments would do over the life of a ship.

TARIFF CHANGES

"The full development of changes which are taking place within our industry including tariff changes will not be complete until we have been through the full slump — which I think we are now experiencing — and boom. Once we have been through the complete cycle — and remember it is a basic economic fact that every slump is followed by a boom — we shall recognise more clearly that we are firmly in together, both shippers and shipping companies.

"We shall need ships that continue to provide the lowest average unit slot cost. We shall together need an adequate service so that shippers can trade. We shall need price stability and continuity of service, and to the maximum extent possible we shall need flexibility to cope with change.

"I submit that the conference structure is the only one that can meet the price and service requirements of the majority of shippers. Therefore, I believe that shipping lines must try and keep the structure intact during these difficult years of slump in their own and in their customers' interests," Mr. Macintosh concluded.



London's Northfleet Hope Container Terminal — Large amounts of money have been invested in ships, terminals, on-shore refrigeration facilities and equipment so that conferences can provide the regular, reliable service that shippers require. Is the conference system still the best for shippers and shipowners?