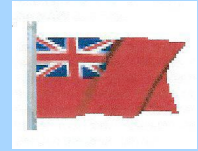




# Merchant Navy Association (Wales) Newsletter



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Wednesday August 10th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club, Ely, Cardiff at 2.30 p.m.

### Wed. September 14th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club, Ely, Cardiff at 2.30 p.m.

### September

Barry Branch Service.

### Wednesday October 12th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club, Ely, Cardiff at 2.30 p.m.

### Saturday October 29th

Seafarers Service, Llandaff Cathedral

### Saturday November 5th

TRBL Festival of Remembrance St Davids Hall Cardiff

### Wed. November 9th

Regular meeting at RAFA Club, Ely, Cardiff at 2.30 p.m.

### Sat. November 12th

MNA (Wales) Service, Cardiff Bay.

### Sunday November 13th

Armistice Day, Parade and Service, Cardiff

Welcome to the July issue of your Newsletter which I hope you will enjoy.

I am always asking for your stories and in this issue Oliver Lindsay has provided a couple on murder and misappropriation in the 1950's I have another provided by Mr F. Marks which I hope to include in the next issue. If you have a story, and I'm sure you have, send it to me and I'll try and include it in the Newsletter and website.

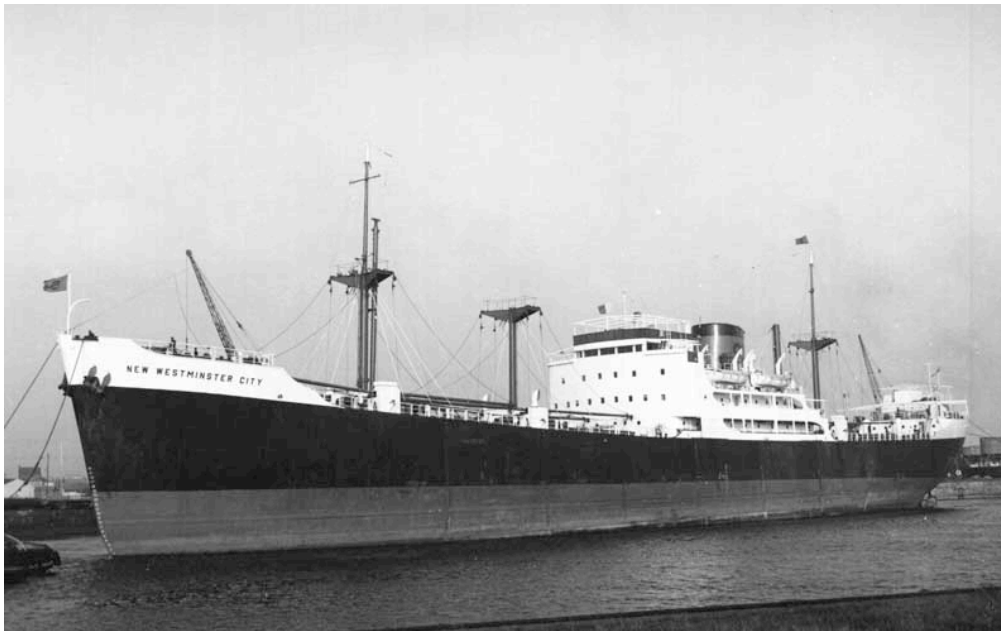
At the AGM in May the Committee was returned unopposed and all officers were reappointed (even Joe Norton agreed to carry on as Minutes Secretary - good on ya Joe). Contact details are unchanged.

It was also agreed that the membership fee for 2011/12 would be increased by £2.00.

I hope those of you that attended the Armed Forces Day in Cardiff enjoyed the day. Unfortunately I was unable to attend as I had an appointment in Malta. The photograph, which was provided by Cardiff County Council, shows our President and Chairman in full regalia on the ramparts of Cardiff Castle. If you have any photographs of the event and would like to share them with us please send them to me (by e-mail if you have it, if not I will return any hard copies you send) and I will put them on our website all duly accredited of course.



Enjoy the Summer.



### **Murder at Breakfast**

The 16th August 1959 found the M.S. New Westminster City berthed below the cliffs at Rosario, on the River Parana, loading general cargo which included several large parcels of bagged sunflower expellers.

The second day of loading opened sunny and mild, a beautiful winter morning and a promise of a good loading day. At about 0740 hours the stevedores led by their foreman and his son descended the cliff face by means of the steel stairway on the cliff face and strolled the 200 yards or so to the ship's accommodation ladder. The foreman accompanied by his son started climbing the ship's ladder followed by the stevedores. One of the stevedores standing on the wharf shouted up to the foreman "have you ordered extra stitchers for repairing the broken bags containing expellers?". The foreman with a wave of his hand dismissed the question, for which he paid with his life. In the hand of the stevedore on the wharf appeared a pistol, he fired two shots, the first struck the foreman in the head and he died instantly on the gangway, the second shot fatally wounded the foreman's son who fell from the gangway onto the wharf and died two hours later in hospital. The murderer turned and

ran to the cliff and ascended the stairway and disappeared. Soon police, doctor and ambulances arrived and attended to the incident formalities.

At the time of the incident I was standing at the top of the gangway waiting for the foreman to board to discuss stowage, rather too close to the victims for comfort.

Normality was soon restored. The gangway sea-cunny for the second time within an hour scrubbed the accommodation ladder down to remove the blood etc. The ensign was lowered to fly at half mast. The butler beat the gong for a late breakfast. No loading was performed for the next two days out of respect for the two men who had died.

Up to the time of sailing the murderer had not been found, however I learnt from officials that twelve months previously he shot and killed another man. Apparently he was a member of a wealthy family who paid a very substantial fine in lieu of a long jail sentence for homicide.

Some readers may well remember Rosario and the berths under the cliffs.

Oliver Lindsay.

## CROSSED THE BAR

Sadly the following members (and ex-members) have crossed the bar since the last Newsletter

*Mr E.A.S. George of Cardiff - January 2011*

*Mrs. F.F. Farrelly of Cowbridge - March 2011*

*Mr. K. L. Smith of Cardiff - March 2011*

*Mr. W.J. E. Irish of Barry- March 2011*

*Mrs. S. Williams of Barry - April 2011*

Their sailing hath ended

## NEW MEMBERS

The following new member has signed on:

*Mr.A.J. Peterson of Cardiff - May 2011*

Alex joined his first ship, M.V. Wairangi on the 22nd October 1952 as a Fireman Peggy and stayed with the ship, with some short leave periods, until 23rd January 1954. Other ships included M.V. Dominion Monarch, S.S. Rookwood, S.S. Tregothnan, M.V. Edenmore and his final ship S.S. Asia which he left in October 1959.

Welcome aboard

## Superintendent's Luck

It was the summer of 1952, the S.S. Tacoma City, Master Captain R.E. Shilstone, was in Barry loading a cargo of coal for Buenos Aires. It was a Saturday and pleasant apart from clouds of coal dust from the three tips working the vessel. However, the crew could look forward to a peaceful afternoon as it was traditional for all loading to cease at 1200 hours on a Saturday in South Wales ports so that the coal trimmers and those working on the coal tips could if they so wished enjoy the national game of rugby union.

That morning the attending Marine Superintendent instructed one of the apprentices to go into the pantry where the Chief Steward was waiting with a carton (rationing was still on) and place the carton in the unlocked boot of his car, a black Austin which was parked on the far side of the quayside rail tracks and safely clear of any rail track operations. The apprentice did exactly as instructed. After lunch the lad was approached by an Irate Superintendent who on checking the boot of his car found no carton. The lad insisted that he had taken the carton ashore and stowed it in the boot of a black Austin car. They both went to the gangway and looked across at the car, the lad looked at the Superintendent and said "Sir you have shifted your car a little, When I placed the carton in the boot it was parked abreast of the gangway" Christmas arrived early in 1952 for the unknown owner of a black Austin car whose boot also happened to be unlocked.

Later in the afternoon, the superintendent having past the risk of apoplexy but now with greasy hands, sought out the same apprentice again, whose day aboard it happened to be, to obtain some paraffin from the lamp locker. Whilst they were in the locker getting the paraffin the superintendent noticed there were a surprising number of full two gallon cans of Esso. Petrol being rationed and his car petrol tank low he told the apprentice to take one of the cans and pour it into his car's tank and he would inform the Mate so he will be aware of the matter, and then added "make sure you get the right car this time. The apprentice said "aye aye Sir".

About an hour later the superintendent disembarked to motor home - you may have guessed it - the car would not start. The can contained paraffin. The air became blue but not by car exhaust smoke. The ship having stored in Barry the paraffin tanks had been filled and the surplus placed in the empty Esso petrol cans.

I will leave it to your imagination what was said to the humble apprentice. It was just not the superintendent's day.

Oliver Lindsay.

## Can you Help?

We get requests to provide information on various maritime topics and these are relayed to members at our regular monthly meetings and via email to those who have access. Most have short response times but I've included a couple in this Newsletter that you may be able to help with. If you can help please contact the person direct.

**1.** We are producing a BBC1 show about the weather, which will be broadcasting live during the summer from locations across the UK. It will be looking at the science of weather as well as looking at its impact on popular culture, mythology, sport and history. At present we are looking at potential ideas for films and subjects to be included in the shows. Among the ideas is a film looking at the weather phenomenon called St Elmo's Fire, which obviously has historic links with mariners. I have spoken to various scientists and even airline pilots who have witnessed the effect and explained it but I was very keen to see if any of today's seafarers have ever spotted it. At present this is just one of many ideas we have and whether we take the idea forward all depends on finding people who wouldn't mind chatting with me on the subject. If anyone has any knowledge of this subject it would be great if they could drop me an email or give me a call on the contacts below. Time is quite pressing so the sooner people get in touch the better. Many thanks for your help in advance.

Pete Bennett

Love Productions Ltd, 43 Eagle Street, London, WC1R 4AT

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7067 4839

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7067 4821

E-mail: [pete.bennett@loveproductions.co.uk](mailto:pete.bennett@loveproductions.co.uk)

**2.** We are researching a potential TV programme about the coal convoys that travelled from South Wales to London during WW2, known as the Coal Scuttle Brigade. We are keen to locate any seamen who took part, along with archive and statistics of casualties and naval engagements. If any of your members are able to help, please contact Richard Edwards by email, phone or letter.

Many thanks

Richard Edwards, Element

Crichton House, 11-12 Mount Stuart Square

Cardiff Bay, CF10 5EE

Telephone: +44 (0) 29 20472122 Fax: +44 (0) 29 20472230

website: [www.elementproductions.co.uk](http://www.elementproductions.co.uk)

## Subscriptions

**The Membership Secretary reminds all members that subscriptions for the year 2011/2012 are now due. The annual subscription is now £10.00.**