

Special coaches run London staff to work

IT'S BUSINESS ALMOST AS USUAL - DESPITE ALL THE PROBLEMS

By David Wragg

"At the moment we're getting by", commented Derek Hall, Head of Bulk Shipping, on the oil supply situation, although he might equally well have been speaking about any of the problems which are hitting the P & O Group and the country as a whole at the present time.

The oil supply situation shipping and haulage, and office heating! Through water transport being classified as an essential service, much of P & O has escaped the limitation of office lighting and power to three days a week, but the need to cut electricity consumption by at least half remains.

Efforts to conserve increasingly valuable bunker fuel have led to the cancellation of a lightly-booked cruise by the Arcadia from the United States to Hawaii, guaranteeing sufficient fuel for the Christmas cruise to the Caribbean. When possible, cruising speeds of the Group's ships have been

reduced, so far without serious delay although the Canberra will have to omit seven ports of call, including Barbados, Vancouver and Colombo, from her round-the-world cruise.

Wildly inflated oil prices have also brought the unwelcome, but necessary, imposition of surcharges on a number of services, mainly cruises and ferries.

Haulage economy measures involve reducing unladen journeys to the absolute minimum by re-scheduling collections and deliveries. Bulk deliveries of diesel oil can still be obtained, although some delays have been experienced. The real problem lies in obtaining diesel at garages en route,

with many refusing to operate the agency card system which removes the need for drivers to travel with large amounts of cash.

Industrial action on British Railways has affected a large number of staff, directly or indirectly. For the worst affected, P & O has, with other shipowners, hired a fleet of 25 coaches to bring office staff from parts of Essex, Kent and Surrey. Even so, it is an early start and a late return for most!

A chilly reception awaits staff at the Group's offices, with heating limited to a maximum 63 degrees. Boilers are now shut down at weekends and the heating is not turned on until 6.30 each morning, instead of the

usual 4 am. Air conditioning systems have to be kept working to provide ventilation in the buildings in which these are installed, but many lights have been switched off.

Staff attitudes, according to Brian Redrup of Property Division, who is in something of a hot sweat at present, are generally good, although a minority does exist which attempts to turn lights on again. Brian Redrup's unstinted praise does go to maintenance staff, however, who have been responsible for rapid implementation of planned cuts in electricity consumption.

Gerry Manley, in charge of Administration at the

Liverpool offices, feels that, "staff have been very co-operative, people understand the difficulties". Liverpool shipping staff have been able to keep working, even in buildings partly occupied by concerns subject to the three day rule.

The worst feature of the difficulties is that there is no sure end in sight. Even with press reports of adequate supplies for Britain from the Middle East, this will still not ease the problems of obtaining fuel in some countries, while elsewhere it will be a question of rationing by price!

Over 400 at Pandor Club's annual dinner

On Saturday 15 December over 400 Pandor Club members and guests went to Quagino's Banqueting Suite in the West End of London for the club's annual candle-lit dinner and dance.

A member's double ticket at £5.50 represented tremendous value comprising as it did cocktails from 7 - 7.30 pm, a splendid four-course dinner, cabaret and then dancing until 1 am to two top class bands. The Pandor Committee, as a special gesture during these hard times, were pleased to peg prices to those of last year so that no increase was passed on to a member although this meant that the club stood a considerable cost itself.

Nearing the conclusion of the dinner, chairman, Walter Kerr in a brief and charming speech welcomed all guests, congratulated everyone on obtaining petrol by foul means or fair, and warmly thanked Mrs Eleanor Payne of Passenger Division for once again arranging the whole event so splendidly.

Then followed cabaret of a quite disbelieving nature of magician, Alan Shaxon and his attractive assistant Anne. This attraction was extremely popular and set the stage for the dancing which followed by Harry Pike and his Band who alternated with the exuberant West Indian Cherrypickers Steel Band.

All in all the vast majority who attended this happy and successful evening voted it one of the very best ever of its kind.

AHSR

MD hooks 44lb yellowtail



How about this for an early morning catch? It took just one hour - between 7 and 8 am - to land this sizeable catch in New Zealand's Bay of Islands. And angling for the 44-pounder that didn't get away was Group Managing Director Mr Sandy Marshall, who started the day right, before continuing his visits to P & O's New Zealand investments. His companions, in their launch Lady Doreen, were Mr Gray Hunter, Managing Director of P & O (New Zealand) and Mr S A Brown.

And then it was off to work for a further round of talks and tours . . .

Wavelength

Regular readers of *Wavelength* will see that this issue has been reduced in size to only eight pages.

This is because our printers are now working a three day week instead of their usual six and also because of the Christmas and New Year holidays.

We apologise to those contributors whose stories and photographs are not in this issue. We hope to see them in February.

Discovery Bay sights raft men

OCL's Discovery Bay sighted the Las Balsas Expedition at the end of November while on passage from Sydney to Kao Hsiung.

In a letter to the editor, Discovery Bay's Master, Captain L E Howell says "We sighted them in the early evening about twenty five miles North East from the Queensland coast off Coolangatta. We closed the three rafts and saluted them with ensign and whistle. The members of the expedition were all clearly seen on the large balsas wood rafts, waving from the rigging on the thin masts and standing on the roofs of the banana

leaf huts. "We were able to provide HMAS Labuan, through Brisbane Radio, with the rafts' exact position. Labuan made a rendezvous with Las Balsas and later we heard that they were being towed to a Queensland port. So ending their long journey which began six months previously from Equador." A few months ago, Tekoa went to the aid of the three raft expedition after sighting distress flares 500 miles west of the Galapagos Islands.

But all the raft men wanted, said Tekoa's Master, Captain Max Hellings, was to buy some fresh supplies.

Flextime begins in BSD

For a minimum experimental period of 6 months P & O has introduced a system of variable working hours in BSD, GCD Finance Department at Beaufort House, and Group Pay and Pensions Department.

The scheme which commenced on 3 December is designed to give individuals maximum freedom in deciding hours of work while meeting work requirements.

After the scheme has been in operation in the three experimental areas for 6 months its advantages and disadvantages as seen by the staff in those areas will be considered by both Management and ASTMS and the Executive Staff Representative Committee. A decision on whether the scheme should be extended to other parts of the group or terminated will then be taken.

Everyone in the experimental areas comes under the administrative arrangements whether they wish to take advantage of variable hours or not but they may continue to work their existing hours if they so wish. This includes Management as well as staff.

Crossing the line in Kildare



The day they crossed the line for the first time will be a day to remember for the six people on board Kildare who were granted "the freedom of the Seven Seas" recently. King Neptune and his good wife Queen Aphrodite and his assembled Royal Court deemed it necessary to visit the vessel to ensure that the ceremony was carried out correctly.

The six "victims", Mrs Mills, Mrs Prain, M Curran (cadet), R Lowe (cadet), I Thorneycroft (cadet), and R Richardson (A/E) decided to make things slightly more difficult, but King Neptune's able Police Force soon had them secured and made ready to be presented to their Majesties.

The ceremony was carried out according to the ancient ritual of the sea and to King Neptune's obvious satisfaction as each new "Mariner" was awarded a certificate to the effect that Neptune himself had granted them the freedom of the Seven Seas.

Seen in our photograph are (from left): J Corney (PC), A Mills (Clerk of the Court), D Rice (Queen Aphrodite), D Laverick (King Neptune), N Harris (PC), S Roberts (Chief of Police), A Bramley (Surgeon), J Booth (PC) and R Carlisle (Barber).

POST BAG

That mystery picture was taken on board Sangola

Dear Sir,
With reference to the "Where Are They Now" article in *Wavelength* No.15 I have the following remarks to make.

At the time I was Chief Officer of Olinda and had paid a social call to Sangola and the photo shown in the *Wavelength* was taken in the Chief Officer's cabin of Sangola plus another one at a later stage.

Command

The chap at the left was 3rd Engineer Sangola and I think his name was Cummins and I don't know of his movements since then. Next is Ambrose Mills, Chief Officer Sangola, who eventually got command and retired on medical grounds in the early 60s.

I am on the right and assumed command in 1962 and retired in 1967 on medical grounds. Fred Lovridge, who submitted the photo is on the left in the lower row and it appears he retired to Sydney.

"Aussie"

Next is "Aussie" or Joe Lines, who at the time was 2nd Engineer Sangola. I remember him joining Madura in Adelaide in about 1944. He later became a Superintending Engineer and

as far as I know is currently based in Bombay.

The last member of the group is Ffloyd Stokes who was 2nd Officer Olinda at the time. I first met him when he joined Madura in Liverpool early in 1946. I had met him a number of times between then and the photo being taken. The last I heard of him was that he was in command in the old BI.

I hope these few reminiscences will rekindle Fred's memory to the time! I am presently enjoying fairly good health and try to keep in touch with the old firm, but it is coming more difficult in the changing ways of today.

Captain J M Woolcock
40 Servetus Street,
Swanbourne,
West Australia 6010.

Reunited after 31 years

Dear Sir,
As you know I am a P & O Pensioner living at Springbok Farm, Cranleigh, Surrey.

Last Monday week I walked up to the Convalescent Home, and saw a new arrival talking to our Nursing Sister Lickiss. She said "Here comes an old P & O pensioner."

The new arrival looked at me, and said "I know you." I replied, "And I know you."

He said "What is your name."

The Sugar Loaf was everybody's favourite pub

Dear Sir,
I was most interested in Mr Randall's article which appeared in the August issue of *Wavelength* depicting life in the old Leadenhall Street Building.

He made reference to a pub, the name of which he could not recall and I wonder if it could have been The Ship which stood on the corner of St. Mary Axe and Leadenhall Street.

As a youth of about twelve, I can well remember accompanying my father to the office one Saturday morning (he was employed in the Stationery and Printing Department) and seeing this pub in course of demolition.

On the site a new building was erected later to be occupied, I believe, by the P & O Banking Corporation. Mr. Stephenson's letter in the October issue referred to a pub named the Sugar Loaf.

Of course he is quite right but how many realized it had a name although they constantly walked over it, set in the mosaic stone flooring at the entrance - it was most popularly known as Mooney's.

Once when our Deputy Chairman (Mr A O Long) happened to be passing he was heard to remark: "Whenever I pass, it seems that half the company's staff are entering and the other half leaving."

Dwelling on bygone days, I wonder how many can remember the year when a red plush covered stand was erected in the courtyard by the handymen for viewing the Lord Mayor's Show as it passed.

The Maple,
Argyle Road,
Thorpe-le-Soken,
Clacton, Essex.

V E Wooldrige

How our Thames pilot solved a barge problem - the cheap way

Dear Sir,
The story of the Thames barge scraped by the Viceroy of India told in October's *Wavelength* reminds me of some BI stories of long ago.

The scene is the London river in an old-fashioned pea-souper - visibility practically nil - with a Thames pilot peering into the murk as the ship forges ahead dead slow. His lookout on the fo'c'sl suddenly sings out: "Ba-arge on the port bow, 'Arry!"

"Right."
A moment later: "Ba-arge on the starboard bow, 'Arry!"

The pilot leans over the dodger: "Right. Which is the cheapest?"

"The one on the starboard bow."

"Ha-ard a port!"
This was of course under the old steering rules.

In the old troopship *Nevasa* under similar foggy conditions we were crawling up Southampton Water. About 1,000 soldiers as well as the ship's crew peered anxiously around. The Colonel Commandant, O C Troops, looked up to the bridge from his passenger deck and shouted: "It's all clear overhead, Captain - blue sky!"

Captain Swanson looked down at him. "We're not going that way, unless the boilers burst," he said. A hoary old joke now, but not so old in 1927.

In the *Nuddea* we had a 2nd Mate - Tangy Law, ex-Wangaratta cadet - who had a proper appreciation of the dignity and importance of his station on the poop. There was no bridge telephone then, but Tangy's announcements of events by megaphone from the poop would have done justice to the Dean of St Pauls.

On one occasion after the order "Let go aft" had been given his reply "All gone and clear aft, Sir!" was voiced in such a sonorous chant that one was irresistibly reminded of some solemn rite.

Captain Horner turned to the pilot and bowed low. "I see no cause or just impediment why we should not proceed," he said.

I hope these few anecdotes provoke others to recall some of the humour of past days, so often forgotten.

Wilfred Monk
18 Sairard Gardens,
Eastwood,
Leigh-on-Sea.

Send your letters to The Editor, *Wavelength* P & O Building London EC3

Superannuation cheque presented to B+I



Mr John R Turner, Chairman of P & O Short Sea Shipping handing over a cheque for £290,000 to Mr Gordon Taylor, Assistant General Manager of the British & Irish Steam Packet Company.

The cheque represented part payment of the transfer value of the former Coast Lines Superannuation Fund due to members who transferred to B+I Line after the sale of the agency in October 1971.

Trans-world rowers leave in Eagle

Two men and a young woman who plan to row around the world left Southampton last month on board Eagle for Tangier.

With them went their boat — Britannia II — in which John Fairfax and Sylvia Cook rowed across the Pacific.

The trio — Derek King, Peter Bird and Carol Maystone — were heading for Gibraltar where they planned to carry out sea trials before starting on their marathon voyage which they expect will take about 30 months.

North Sea Ferries have discontinued their container service between Hull and Rotterdam. A spokesman for the company said substantial losses had been incurred from its commencement in 1970 and that further losses could not be accepted.

More than two thousand foam mattresses have been supplied by the Dunlopillo Division of Dunlop Limited for the two new passenger-car ferries being built for North Sea Ferries.

The two vessels, are due to be delivered in May and November and will operate between Hull and Rotterdam.

Ulster Merchant, a 1,208 dwt container ship which recently entered service with the Belfast Steamship Company, has been chartered to Anglo Irish Transport to maintain a daily container service between Preston and Larne.

Formerly owned by Embdena Küstenschiffahrt GmbH of Emden, Ulster Merchant — built in 1971 — can carry 63 standard 20 ft ISO containers.

Mr Brian Rosier has become manager of Coastal Roadways in succession to Mr Glyn Davies.

Brian joined P & O this year from the Barking Depot of MAT Transport where he was transport manager. He was previously Transport Manager of Europa Ferry Trailers at Felixstowe.

Farewell gift for Liverpool's rector



Mr John R Turner, Chairman of P & O Short Sea Shipping, gave a farewell luncheon on board the Belfast Steamship car ferry Ulster Queen for Canon Edwyn Young, Rector of Our Lady and St Nicolas, the Parish Church of Liverpool.

Canon Young leaves the parish this month to become Chaplain to the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy in the Strand, London.

Presenting Canon Young with a silver tray on behalf of his friends in P & O Short Sea Shipping, Mr Turner paid tribute to the valued efforts of the Canon in establishing a friendly and happy relationship between the Parish Church of Liverpool and members of the shipping community ashore and afloat.

Old oil painting on glass shows GSN's 425 ton paddlesteamer Panther

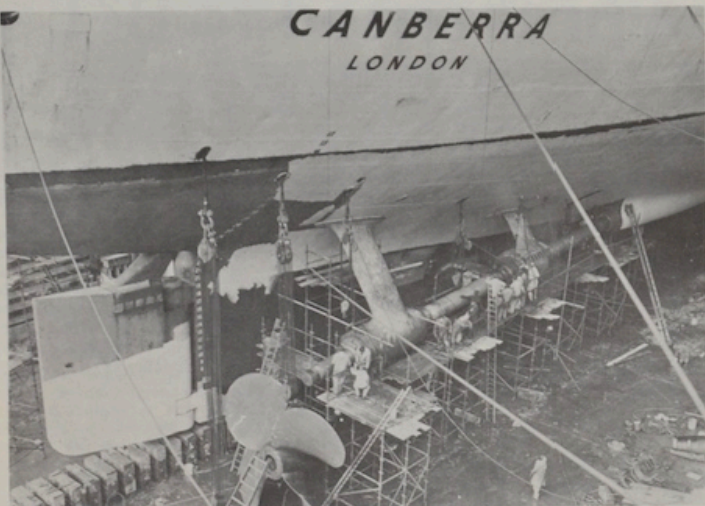
This painting of the old GSN Panther has recently been presented to Southern Ferries by Mr J Beckley of Cliftonville, Kent, the retired Manager of GSN for Thanet.

The old Panther, a 425-ton paddlesteamer capable of 12 knots, was bought by GSN in 1851, and was in service between London and Continental ports. With a length of 180 feet, she was powered by a 136 hp engine.

The painting is signed "P.N.", but the artist's identity and the exact date of the painting are not known.

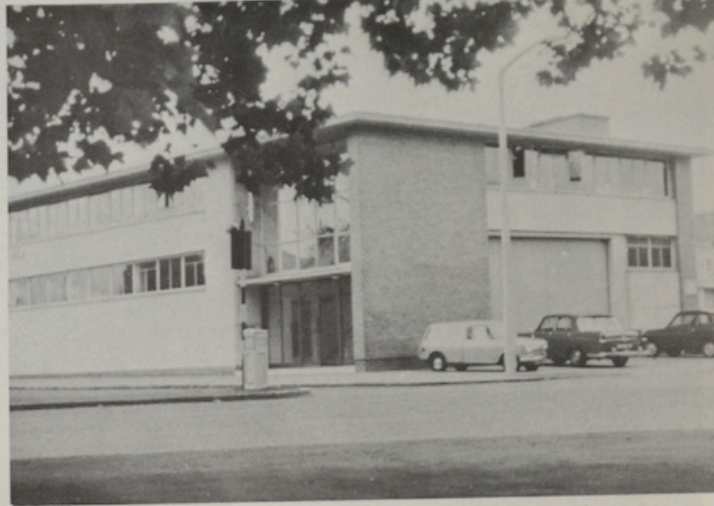
The new Panther, 4,400 tons, entered service on the Le Havre route in November, and sailed on her maiden voyage to San Sebastian (Pasajes) on 22 December, fully booked.





Canberra in drydock

Canberra seen in drydock at Southampton during her recent overhaul, when amongst many other things both her propellers and tailshafts were inspected.



Changes at Southampton

How quickly things change. Many people will be familiar with the Passenger Division's main Southampton office on the corner of Briton Street and the photograph shows it a few years ago before the four storey tower block was built.

Ode to Orsova

The sun, the sky,
the deep blue sea
A freshening breeze
exhilarates me
Orsova lifting on the
gentle swell
Could life a finer story tell?

Foam-rested rollers, the
ship's purring power
Bearing us landward each
passing hour
Memory will treasure these
halcyon days
In rapture so rare, true
ecstasy lays

As Orsova casts off — heading
for her journey's end
Affectionately we salute our
retiring floating friend

Frederick J Kirkham

Passenger on Orsova cruise 579

N.B. Mr Kirkham is one of our
valued regular travellers and has
already booked for a 1974
cruise. Editor



Farewell gifts for Head and master

The 13th December saw both Nevasa and Uganda together in Piraeus. Mr Case, Headmaster Uganda arranged a soccer match between the two ships and Uganda emerged victorious winning by 6 goals to 0.

The meeting of the two ships provided an opportunity for both ships companies, at a party held on board Uganda, to express their thanks and best wishes to Captain Baker and Mr Case on their forthcoming retirements.

Captain Baker joined British India as a cadet in 1930 and served in all its many lines both I K and India base, but has been associated with the Educational Cruise project since its inception and has commanded all four school ships. Mr Case joined Nevasa as Headmaster in 1965 and has been 'the head' to over 150,000 students since then.

Captain Baker (above left) on behalf of the two ships companies, presented Mr Case with two originals by Baik, a contemporary Venetian artist, and then Captain Baker was himself presented with a large Baik original from both ships by Mrs Ida Digweed, a Stewardess who has served many years with the British India Company.

A plaque which was presented to Orsova in 1972 by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution has been given to the Falmouth lifeboat station.

Presented to Orsova in recognition of the ship's money raising efforts in aid of the RNLI, the plaque was handed to Lifeboatman Timmins, a passenger on Orsova's last voyage.

He was asked to take the plaque to Falmouth so it could be displayed alongside other plaques in the boathouse.

There were some raised eyebrows when the following telex arrived in London from the Third Radio Officer, Arcadia: 'Not yet received initial issue of new cap badges and brain. Please expedite.'

The message should, of course, have read '... cap badge and braid.'

10,000 cruise tickets have been issued already

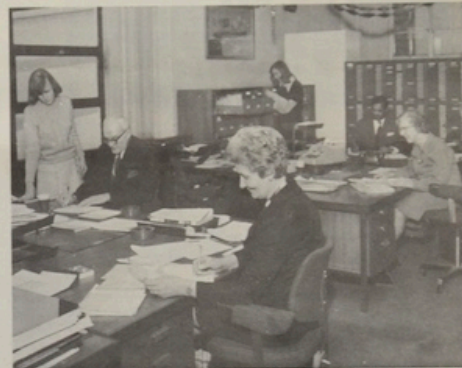
In the December issue we reported that 22,000 passengers had already booked for the 1974 season — about 50% of our capacity.

The section behind the scenes responsible for issuing the tickets for cruises is therefore featured in this issue. Seldom do they get the credit they deserve. Some idea of the volume they contend with can be gathered from the fact that they have issued 10,000 tickets for the 1974 season and by the end of the 1974 cruising season they will have issued a further 45,000 tickets.

The volume of paper work emanating from this operation defies description and it is performed by Joe Duranti and eight staff some of whom are featured in the accompanying photographs.

Joe and his section are part of the Financial Accounts Department who in turn are a part — and a very vital part — of the Financial Controller's area.

If you are lucky enough to go on a cruise or if any of your friends go on a cruise no doubt you will spare a thought for Joe and his splendid team without whom the cruising operation would just not operate.



L to R: Sally Smith, Bob Richards, Marie Veale, Christine Cummins, Joe Fernandes and Barbara Fredericks.



L to R: Walter d'Rose, Stuart Baker, Helen Maybank, and Joe Duranti.

Canberra's Christmas cruise is almost a sell-out

With virtually every berth sold, Canberra sailed on the 15 December for her three week Christmas cruise.

Not only was it a great achievement to reach this load factor but also a notable feat to get all the passengers to Southampton

despite the difficulties of the rail go-slow.

Southern Region had promised two special trains to lift approximately 900 of the 1700 passengers who had indicated they wished to go by train: in the event, one driver let them down and consequently everything had to be re-organised on to one

somewhat lengthened train. Some passengers did get the seats they had for but at least they arrived on board.

Now, everybody is happy that the oil situation permit Canberra to sail the round the world in January.

CONVOY TO INDIA

Port Glasgow on a mopish, January Saturday. Fitful drizzle. Grime. Querulous, unbecoming bleating from chunky tugs. Brown, bass voices from ocean-going vessels.

Ravelled about with webbing, bowed down under kit-bags, rifles and steel helmets, prickly-eyed after an all night train journey, we gazed at the troopship.

Feelings mixed and eddied in our chatter; approval, apprehension; expectancy, eagerness; rejection and rejoicing. In common key to all of us — excitement, tempered by a maturity forced by four years of war.

Drab grey, and with a tonnage of some 20,000 the Otranto was to be our home for the next six weeks. Like many wartime troopers, she had been improvised from a top-class liner.

Now, sprouting anti-aircraft guns and clad in a massive array of life-rafts and floats, she was stamped with the hallmark of austerity.

To hoarse commands we broke ranks and edged crab-like up the gangway, rifle-slings snagging, nailed boots slipping, NCOs cursing.

First stop the armoury to hand in weapons. Then on into the bowels of the ship. Deep below the water-line we arrived at our troopdeck.

Long tables, a clutter of gleaming utensils for carrying food, stands of fire equipment, bedding racks crammed with blankets and hammocks, enormous galvanised bins for rubbish, the next deck but inches above our heads.

Blankly we viewed the congestion. And soon we were to discover that the propellers were just below us and, in heavy seas, they raced and turned the deck into a dancing, shivering mirage.

At noon we slid quietly down the Clyde. Passing Gourock we briefly became spectators at a football



The convoy heads for India. Photo: Imperial War Museum.

By Lieutenant Colonel Tony Yarnold, RA, who was on board Otranto when she sailed from Port Glasgow in 1943

match; and the crowd turned from the game to give us a cheer. By teatime we were heading for Northern Ireland and steaming under rougher conditions. By mid-evening hundreds of young soldiers wrestled with their first bout of sea-sickness as we butted into mountainous green waves.

No one paid much attention to their supper rations and a lifeboat practice was an agonising, wretched farce.

Slowly we crept into the Atlantic and more ships began to join us as the convoy formed. And as they arrived so did the Royal Navy escorts. Rakish destroyers

chivvied ships of all descriptions and many vintages into position. Signal lamps flashed, Flags were run up and we prepared for the first leg of our voyage to the Far East.

As the sea-sickness receded we began to take notice of our surroundings. Mess orderlies trekked to the galley for our meals. Their journey was through a labyrinth of alleyways and along a stretch of open deck where winter wind buffeted and stinging spray added a bit more seasoning to the rapidly cooling food.

At night we lay like sardines in a tin. Each hammock was overlapped on

each side by the heads or feet of four other hammocks. Getting into one's blankets demanded gymnastic ability and the technique of a commuter on the London Underground.

By day the Army permanent staff pressured us into a frenzy of activity. Mess decks were cleaned and re-cleaned. Stocks of wire wool, bathbrick and polish seemed inexhaustible. Potatoes by the ton were peeled. PT was carried out on the open deck — and no-one fell into the sea. In the afternoons we were taught elementary Ardu. And there were lifeboat drills and more lifeboat drills.

For days we steamed westwards and gradually the convoy settled to a regular pattern. As each dawn broke, the lines of ships hastily adjusted to their correct positions. Those which had lost station overnight, or dropped behind, scurried back.

Our speed was that of the slowest ship, and the destroyers worked off surplus energy in frequent forays out to the flanks.

At night we were completely blacked out. As darkness descended, the giant rubbish bins were man-handled to the rails and emptied. Nothing was thrown overboard during daylight for fear that submarine packs might pick up our scent. On several occasions there were scares and our course was changed regularly.

When we were well out into the Atlantic — "Thought we were going to India, not Halifax!" the experts had grumbled — we turned south and then hooked back on a bearing for Gibraltar.

The weather warmed and, by now accomplished sea-farers, we began to enjoy the routine. Card-schools flourished. Crown and Anchor boards appeared in hidden corners. Impromptu concerts gave us a chance to add even bawdier verses to the Rabelaisian ballads our fathers had sung only a quarter of a century before.

But as it got hotter we began to suffer from our overcrowded quarters. Refuse rotted and stank. Tempers fermented. Slanging matches

became more frequent and occasionally grew into fights. But there was no lasting animosity and things always evened themselves out.

Then one day Gib emerged from wreaths of mist and we entered the Mediterranean. Along the North African coastline, in calmer waters we made better speed. Drifting wreckage brushed past our sides and there was one major alarm that a U-boat was on our tail. We were below decks and the first depth-charge seemed to go off under our feet. Then followed a succession of charges. The effect was concussive — and frightening.



Otranto

So we made our way to Port Said where we paused while stores were taken on board and fresh fruit made a welcome addition to a diet which had become increasingly slender and lacking in variety. Bumboats swarmed around the ship and were ordered off.

A Greek water-tanker came alongside with her funnel just level with our rails. With brisk initiative we filled one of our outside bins with water and poured it down the smoking stack. There followed a blast of Greek epithets and we discreetly withdrew and studied the scene on the other side.

"That was a damn sight easier than water-bombing in Marylebone," commented

Sandy. In our transit hotel in London we had perfected a game with paper-bags filled with water.

From the fifth floor we had launched them at the bowler hatted gents who passed below. It took a nice calculation to score a hit and depended on judging the speed the target was walking against the dropping time of the bomb.

The next day we set off down the Suez Canal. From either bank we were hailed by crews manning the heavy anti-aircraft guns. We lined the rails as the gunners quizzed us as to where we had come from —

"Anyone from Hammer-smith?" — and, if there was the questioner walked smartly along keeping speed with the ship while queries were answered about his favourite pub, the bombing, or his girl-friends. Thus, news of home filtered through to many sunnated veterans of the desert.

The Red Sea hinted at things to come. The temperature climbed. Wind scoops were put out in an attempt to improve conditions in accommodation above the water-line. Men moved up into out-of-bounds areas to try to get some sleep — and were tactfully ignored by the ship's staff.

One day we turned about to take advantage of a slight following breeze. Aden, pungent with oil, blurred by the night. On into the Arabian Sea and a distant glimpse of the Empty Quarter. Another change in course and we headed on the final leg to India.

Bombay welcomed us under blazing skies. Dozens of half-starved coolies scuttled aboard and our kit was rapidly transferred to the dockside. In a flash we were disembarked and, in our ill-fitting khaki drill, took a last look at the Otranto.

Smoke coiled lazily from the twin funnels. Ship's officers, immaculate in tropical whites, trod purposefully down the gangway for a brief shore-leave.

As we turned to march to the train, derricks swung over the holds and the final emptying began.



The convoy from the air. Photo: Imperial War Museum.

Maintenance head Pandor Club darts league

The 1973-74 season is now well under way and the increased interest in the section is best shown that eleven teams have entered the Departmental and Associated Companies Team League Competition as opposed to last season's three team entry.

Entries for all the major competitions closed on 31st December 1973 and the first big night of the season is on Tuesday 5th February, 1974 for three "Enter-on-the-Night" Competitions (Singles, Doubles and Round-the-Clock).

This will be held in the Pandor Club (time to be advised) and will be open to guests (one per Pandor Club member).

Anyone requiring further details of any of the sections' activities, please telephone the Secretary, Mr A A Readman - 01-626 9764/7.

Team League Competitions 1973-74

Table up to and including 30th November 1973

	P	W	L	F	A	Pts
Property Maintenance	10	7	3	18	12	18
Anglo Overseas "A"	4	4	0	11	1	11
Gray Dawes Westray	7	4	3	11	10	11
Anglo Overseas "C"	6	3	3	10	8	10
Anglo Overseas "B"	7	4	3	10	11	10
Commissionaires	7	3	4	10	11	10
M.S.D. Admin.	5	3	2	9	6	9
Bishopsgate Insurance	5	2	3	7	8	7
M.S.D. Ladies	4	1	3	5	7	5
Computer Bureau	5	1	4	4	11	4
Print/G.H.D.	6	1	5	4	14	4

Leading Point Scorers

- 7 - J Tullis (Property Maintenance)
- 6 - B Westow (A.O.T. "C")
- 4 - D Bridle (Gray Dawes), S Pierson (A.O.T. "A"), K Pollard (Property Maintenance), A Bell (Commissionaires)
- 3 - B Palmer (A.O.T. "A"), B Searle (A.O.T. "B"), J Mead (Commissionaires), L Rankin (M.S.D. Admin.)

Highest Finishing Scores

- 68 - A Squires (Computer Bureau) v Property Maintenance Nov. 1973
- 64 - T O'Shea (M.S.D. Admin) v M.S.D. Ladies Oct. 1973
- 60 - J Mead (Commissionaires) v A.O.T. "C" Nov. 1973

A A Readman

Provided there is sufficient support, the Maori-Pandor Squash Rackets Club plan to hold a film evening during the first quarter of the new year.

The club has been given the opportunity of hiring four films - Introduction to the Game; Basic Shots; Attacking and Defensive Shots; and Match Play.

Would those interested please inform G J Martin (283 800 Extension 2456).

Young married couple seek s/c furnished flat. Easy access to Central London preferred. Contact Mrs R Oswald Extn 3718 SRY.

Another great evening at the pub - almost with no beer!

The Pandor Club's Entertainments Committee, headed by Mrs Penny Collins of Bishopsgate Insurance Company, came up trumps again on Friday 30 November when another highly successful "Pub Night" was held in the Club Room in the basement of Beaufort House.



Mr Rider, Mrs Veale, Mr Ignatious, Mr Veale, Mr Pratt and Paul Meeus

It was touch and go as to whether the Whitbread Brewery strike would terminate in time to enable supplies of draught or bottled beer to be delivered to the Pandor Club in time.

Luckily, the strike was over by the beginning of that week and so a happy crowd of members and guests were able to do full justice to the replenished supplies.

They gathered in some numbers to enjoy an excellent social evening singing around the piano, which was played by Ronnie Bridges.

That the evening was such a success was due, in the main, to the splendid efforts of Mrs Irene Smith and helpers, who were in charge of arrangements for the evening in question; and also to Mr Trevor Chilver, who, with his usual ebullience, led the singing of many old-time music hall songs. His help, and vocal enthusiasm, was very much appreciated and there is an assured future for him in the East End any night!

The Photographic Club's Secretary, John Gray, took a number of photographs covering the event, some of which are printed here.

An exhibition of them all will be on view in the Club Room, and anyone interested may order copies at the price of 15p each from J Gray TSD/IP, NH5. A H S Robinson



Ron Pogmore (right), Joe Murphy (second right) with their guests



Miss Morgan, Mrs Peplow and Mrs Sams



Mr and Mrs J Pratt, their daughter and her fiance.



Another group of 'pub nighters'



Ken Smith, Ron Garrett, Agnes Burton, Sam Balls and Irene Smi

Bl afloat staff pensioners in Britain

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Southampton prize winners

P & O Cadet prize winners at Southampton College of Technology (School of Marine Engineering) and College of Further Education, Plymouth were:

S Maughan, CFL, Texaco Science prize of £5;
 K J Vernon, BSD, BP Tanker Co Science prize of £5;
 P A Chambers, CFL, Marine Society Liberal Studies prize of £2.50; N A Thorpe, CFL, Marine Society Liberal Studies prize of £2.50; C A Yates, GCD, Ellerman prize (Phase III) - Binoculars; C J Adams, GCD, Shell prize - Workshop Practice - Book.

Praise for cadets

The following letter has been received by The Editor.

Dear Sir,

I was very pleased to see the photograph of the cadets of Manora at Freemantle as illustrated in the November issue of *Wavelength*.

My reason for pleasure is that all are tastefully and correctly dressed and their hair is nicely trimmed short, which we so rarely see now-a-days, except for some of the more senior personnel.

Those in charge of the cadets as well as they themselves are to be congratulated upon their smart appearance.

I am a retired P & O Captain and I think there is good and promising material in these cadets.

It is eleven years since I "swallowed the anchor" and I find *Wavelength* a good medium for keeping in touch with some of the many changes taking place.

R H Turner

Meadowsweet,
 Three Oaks,
 Near Hastings,
 Sussex.

A YEAR IN INDIA

To step out of a 747 at Santa Cruz Airport at 4.00 a.m. on a Sunday morning at the beginning of October is something akin to being wrapped in a warm damp towel in an overheated sauna bath. One's first reaction is quite unprintable, and one's second is to march firmly back into the airconditioned economy-class splendour, plug in the stereo headphones, and get taken good care of all the way to an Australian spring.

However, muttering outlandish Anglo-Saxon expressions of emotion as I passed under the gaze of about 4,000 inquisitive eyes on the airport roof, I persevered to Indian Customs and two hours and a lot of duty later, I was ushered to a gleaming blue Hindustan Ambassador.

Many a comment has been passed on this remarkable vehicle, the basis of which appears to be the 1956 Morris Oxford. But most will agree

there is no substitute for riding in the thing, and it is impossible to aptly describe the sheer joy of hurtling along Marine Drive in Bombay, flat-out, rattling and shaking at the staggering speed of 55 miles an hour, or of borrowing a replacement from Mackinnon's "fleet", forgetting the registration number, and coming out of the Taj Mahal Hotel to find twenty identical Ambassadors parked mockingly in a row.

However, these novel experiences still lay in the future, and my first Indian journey was entrusted to a Jehu who was determined to emulate Jackie Stewart or meet his forefathers in the attempt.

Best time

The best time to drive from the airport to the city is when it is pitch dark, as the 25-minute run is one of the worst advertisements for India that could possibly be offered to the first time visitor. The sights and smells of shanty-town living assault the unsuspecting senses and contrast starkly to the ostentatious opulence of the Oberoi-Sheraton Hotel or the more restrained plushness of the Taj.

It is almost impossible to be had up for a driving offence in Bombay. There are only two inconspicuously bracketed offences on which action seems to be taken — one is parking in the usual place at the wrong time (when a lowly-paid cop gets an excess of professional zeal), the other is running into a cow or person.

Liberty

I am now at liberty to reveal that the Indian Highway Code does, in fact, contain a never-printed but well-headed paragraph on "What To Do If You Run Into Anything". The morally cowardly but practically sound piece of advice offered to those unfortunate enough to have erred is to flee the scene without so much as a glance at whatever may be left immobilised behind, and report the accident at the fifth or sixth nearest police station, preferably accompanied by

Michael Haig of GCD Development looks back on his recent tour of duty with Mackinnons

the BI Security Superintendent. For those unwary enough to linger over their getaway there could be a very grisly end indeed, as passers-by disapprove strongly of drivers knocking people over and seem to relish the prospect of mob justice.

This prospect is doubly alarming as Indian pedestrians have a disconcerting habit of suddenly strolling across a main road, a few hundred at a time, without looking. Even if they do look for oncoming traffic it makes little difference, for few appear to have any sense of speed.

I was constantly amazed to see prospective jay-walkers watch me bearing down on them, then when I was about twenty yards away step carefully into my path. How I missed so many people and weaving cars I have no idea. But even if you miss them, they don't always miss you.

The P & O Bombay Trainees (Class of '73) Special Award for Pedestrian Incompetence must go to a gentleman who actually managed to walk into and knock himself down with my colleague's car, which was perfectly stationary at the time!

Noise

My other lasting impression on Indians transporting themselves from

place to place is that it involves making as much noise as possible. As no one knows what anyone else is going to do in a car or on foot, the standard procedure is to hoot loudly at anything within a fifty-yard radius, whatever direction it may be going. The result is no one takes any notice of horns blowing.

Dangerous

This can be dangerous because once every six months an Indian blows his horn and means it. Once, while strolling nonchalantly to the Bombay Airport terminal from a flight there came a great barrage of truck horns of which I duly took no notice. Some instinct of self-preservation eventually made me look around to find a Kuwait Airways 707 taxiing steadily towards me and uncomfortably close.

Sea

Most readers of this article who have been to India will probably have got there by or in connection with the sea, and many may have had the dubious pleasure of visiting "The Agents", for whatever reason.

Agents' offices seem to cover the whole range from ultra-modern blocks to the upstairs room in the Agent's

home. A visit to Mackinnons' offices in Bombay or Calcutta is no disappointment to enthusiasts of the extraordinary. It is a daunting experience for the first-timer to have to march into the vast open spaces under the Calcutta office dome, heels clicking a tattoo on the marble floor, and to have to select the appropriate regal Deputy or Assistant Manager from the pairs of eyes disdainfully following the visitor's every move.

Prawns

Unfortunately, an Agent's life in Bombay is not all gin and prawns at the Taj, office lunch biryanis, and burn-ups along Marine Drive. There is the routine daily round of visits to the ships, frantic excursions to see the deputy docks manager to get berths for ships immediately on arrival when everybody knows that there's a fifteen-day berthing delay and you haven't got a hope, the after-lunch coffee club merry-go-round with six chairs between eight Assistants, and the answering of endless letters of shippers' complaints from the Deputy Assistant to the Deputy Director-General of Shipping's Under-secretary's Assistant's Head Clerk. There is also the more bizarre side of the job, such as having to spend five days in Kandla.

Kandla is a little port in the state of Gujarat to the North of Bombay. The first problem I encountered was how to get there. As Indian Airlines do not necessarily go to all the places they book you on flights to, I managed to get about half way by 7.00 p.m., having checked in for my flight from Bombay as requested at 11.00 a.m. Fortunately, however, the ubiquitous P & O organization turned up an Agent in Jamnagar, and I swept out of the town through the camels and chickens in vice-regal style for the five-hour drive by 'taxi' to Kandla, where I arrived about two in the morning.

As well as being almost totally vegetarian, Kandla is dry in both senses of the word. Situated by a river running through the mud-flats and desert of the Rann

of Kutch, it has an average rainfall of five inches a year which sometimes comes all on the same day, and liquor is strictly speaking unobtainable. It was here I experienced the real local moonshine, as opposed to the Goanese fenny which can be obtained almost anywhere. The Kandla distillers' two-day-old special de luxe hooch came in a small, sealed bottle ominously labelled Eau de Cologne, with a taste to match. A ratio of 1/4 inch to two bottles of heavily iced Coke still managed to leave a rather sickening feeling.

My impersonations of a shipping agent in India were interrupted after four months by a fascinating and highly instructive 'familiarization' tour of Malaysia and India. I had a welcome return to unrestricted living with five days in Singapore, then on to Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

Rajula

From Penang it was up to Madras on the old Rajula, now sadly deceased. Five days of luxury sunshine cruising across the Bay of Bengal with the deck passengers all behaving themselves — a time for leaning on the rail (not too hard!) watching the flying fish in the white and blue foam of the water and thinking wistfully of the magic of the ocean and what makes men go to sea in ships... etcetera, etcetera (see page 7, P & O cruise brochure). Madras was succeeded by Colombo and RJ Rapps of Development Department whistle-stopping Eastabout while I was Westabout — we met again in Bombay and later in Delhi.

Monsoon

Eventually it was back to Bombay for six months up to and through the monsoon, the latter a period when everything somehow manages to proceed at an even more leisurely pace than before. After two years of failed monsoons, the 1973 production had to be a spectacular. Up until 4th June, when the radar on

Serbistan at 14 Indira Dock watched the wall of rain sweeping across Bombay harbour from Karanja Island and it was something of a rush to get closed up and cargo on the wharf under cover, everyone was praying for rain.

Praying

By the time I left Bombay on 4th September everyone was praying for it to stop, and large parts of North-west India were under water. For me it seemed amazing that things did still go on at all.

People still played at dodgem cars in the streets, the stalls around Flora Fountain still did a roaring trade in smuggled goods, and the "Dwarka" still came and went with astonishing regularity, shutting out Muscat cargo as usual. The most noticeable change was that the pavement dwellers disappeared like the proverbial Arabs in the night, and where they took their blankets to no one seemed able to tell me.

Gulf

The final month of my year's tour took me back to England through Karachi and on Dwarka up the Gulf. My final stop before London was a 24 hour stay in Beirut, courtesy of Pan American. This was something of a failure, as my budgeting misfired in Teheran and I arrived in the Lebanon with precisely £2.10 to my name. Perhaps it was just as well though, for it did mean that at least I wasn't tempted to stay until war broke out!

Check

After yet another rigorous security check it was on to the big silver bird for Heathrow and the disgracefully nationalistic feeling of superior amusement at the tour party of American doctors taking suitably arty snapshots as we flew low over central London.

Through H.M. Customs — quick and easy Greer Channel job this end — and off for dinner to a little mysterious hotel deep in the native quarter of exoti Bagshot.



Children out playing in a Bombay side street.



The washing hangs out to dry as life goes on in a Bombay street