

News of the BISN company, its ships and staff, its history and *histoires*, of ships and sealing wax, nautical natters, maritime miscellanies and swinging of lanterns

FROM THE EDITOR...

As the UK continues to suffer from the worst snow and ice for 150,000 years, your editor found this poignant little brochure in his mail. Ever since he got stuck to a tank valve wheel setting up a pump line on the *Talamba* in the depths of a Bremerhaven winter, he has been totally averse to cold. Whilst tramping in the hills in his favourite Lake District, your editor and his woolly hat are inseparable. His sympathies were so awakened by this leaflet, a donation to the Sailors' Society was sent forthwith to Shirley Road, Southampton, SO15 3HY (<http://www.sailors-society.org>).

After our piece in issue 13 on the alternative use of containers as accommodation blocks, which included a Swedish prison cell, comes news that the idea has also taken root elsewhere. New Zealand is to use containers to create a 60 bed prisoner unit to be ready by next March at Rimutaka Prison north of Wellington. Corrections Minister Judith Collins said the tender process for the first-of-its-kind project had begun and on budget with shipping containers being cheaper than building a new jail. "Corrections is forecast to run out of beds early next year. We have to take immediate action to ensure that prisoners are securely locked away and the public is kept safe," she said. Ms Collins said future jails may be built

from containers with prisoners helping with the assembly. Somehow, this smacks of prisoners having to build their own stockade before they can shelter from the wind and storm. Haven't we moved on apace?!

Sailors' Society

Replacing isolation with belonging

Over 95% of the world's trade upon which we all depend is transported by sea, yet seafarers are often forgotten.

Why the Woolly Hat?

The woolly hat is a basic yet essential item of clothing for seafarers. In addition to the UK, many seafarers come from warm climates such as India, the Philippines and Indonesia and are unaccustomed to the cold weather in the UK, Northern Europe and the Baltic.




The Society distributes over 15,000 woolly hats each year, all knitted by volunteers. Six thousand hats are included in Christmas parcels for seafarers who would otherwise not receive a Christmas gift.

For a seafarer who has not seen their family for many months receiving a hat means a great deal.

Seafarers say:

"It is good to know that someone has been thinking about seafarers like us."

"The hats are knitted with love by kind and thoughtful souls."



Sailors' Society

How else does the Sailors' Society help?

Worldwide the Society's Port Chaplains visit over 20,000 ships a year to support seafarers in whatever way needed. Life at sea is extremely lonely, with small crews who speak many different languages. Therefore the most frequent request from seafarers is to access communication facilities so that they can contact their loved ones. Our Port Chaplains also transport them to the Society's Seafarers' Centres, and to shops, churches and even to hospital.



Often seafarers want to talk in confidence to Port Chaplains; to share burdens such as missing their children, family break-ups due to their absence, work problems or loneliness.

Additionally, the Society provides education for seafarers' children, homes for retired seafarers and welfare grants to support seafarers' families.

How can you help?

Knitting hats:

Knitting hats is a great help and puts you in direct contact with seafarers. Please make sure that you send your name and address with your hat so that we can thank you and acknowledge its safe arrival. The Society can send you a pattern if you wish.



Donations:

We rely heavily on voluntary giving to ensure that we can continue our vital work.

- **Single donation**
Simply complete Sections 1 and 2 of the attached tear-off slip and send it to the Society with your donation.
- **Regular donation by standing order**
This is the easiest way to make a regular payment through your bank; all you need do is complete Sections 1 and 4 on the tear-off slip and return it to the Society.

On any donations, please complete Section 3 if you are a UK taxpayer, so that we can claim gift-aid on your donation.

A goodly issue this, we trust; the continuing correspondence from Derek Ings to his parents, which also involves a menu containing such wartime ingredients as caviar, a thoughtful piece from John Prescott continuing our containerisation theme, a recipe that will bring tears to your eyes (tears of nostalgia that is) and thankfully no jokes. Actually, nobody has cancelled their subscription to "... calling BI" after our last joke, so perhaps another... .. er, perhaps not. To all our contributors, many thanks, to all our readers, many thanks (and wouldn't you like to be a contributor, too?!)

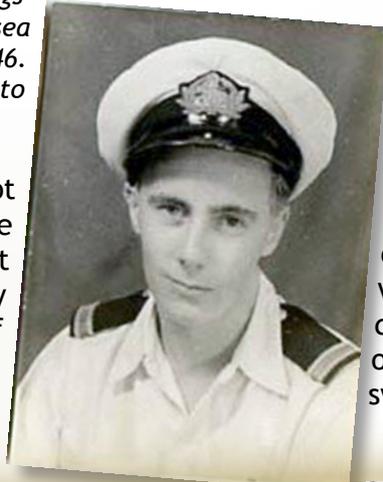
FROM THE INGS FAMILY ALBUM...

(I left "CHANTILLY" on 4.10.45 and joined "CHANDA" as Purser on 24.10.45)

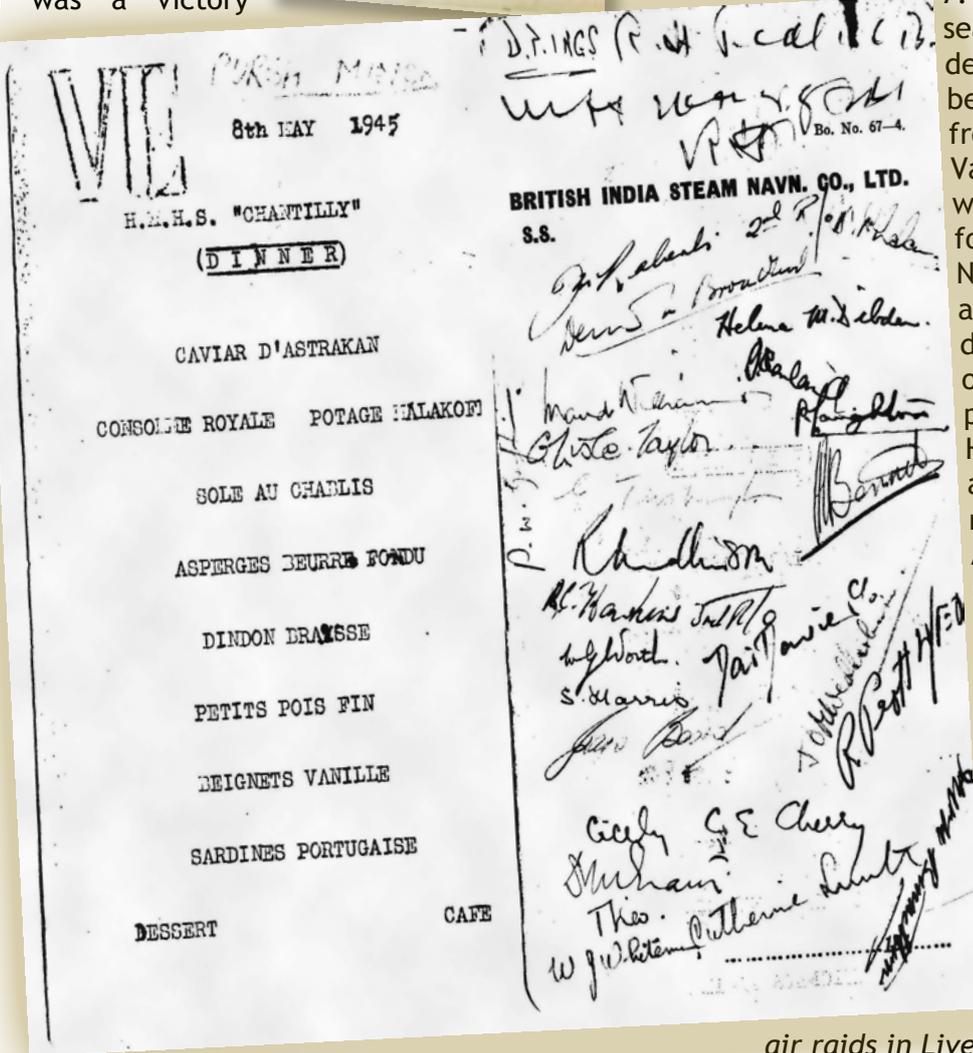


We continue the extracts from Derek Ings' 250 letters to his parents during his BI sea service as a purser from 1943 to 1946. During war time, letters were censored to delete details of ship movements.

6.5.45 - at sea off West Africa. I do not feel capable of expressing in words the heartfelt thankfulness of knowing that the war in Europe is really and truly over. We listened to the speeches of the King and Mr Churchill and received a message from Lord Leathers, the Minister of War Transport, which was a victory message to the Merchant Navy. The "Old Man" invited all the officers to the lounge before dinner to make a few toasts. He was in grand form and made everyone promise to go right through the menu at dinner! It really was a grand meal, starting with caviar and we each had a menu with a large "VE" on the top - the backs of most of them are now covered with signatures. After dinner there was a sing-song on deck which included the hospital orderlies.



4.11.45 - at sea. "CHANDA" is now in the North Atlantic having sailed from Liverpool in ballast with 24 passengers, doubled up under war-time regulations. One of the lady passengers has the same surname as our captain (Francis Harrison) and when I seated her next to him in the dining room she asked him "what part of the ship do you look after?" - I nearly swallowed my fork!



7.11.45 - at sea. Our destination has been altered from Vancouver and we now load for China in New York after disembarking our passengers in Halifax. We are in the midst of an Atlantic storm and with a light ship it is impossible to do any paper work. My pay is now £29 per month. (We had ballasted with rubble from the air raids in Liverpool).

14.8.45 - Cochin. To-day we heard of the Japanese acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration and the ending of the war. The ship is dressed overall as are most of the ships in port, including tugs and dredgers. At 1100 hours all the ships started blowing "Vs" on their sirens and this went on for about an hour. There does not seem to be great deal of excitement on board, the general opinion is "Thank God it is all over, and now what?".

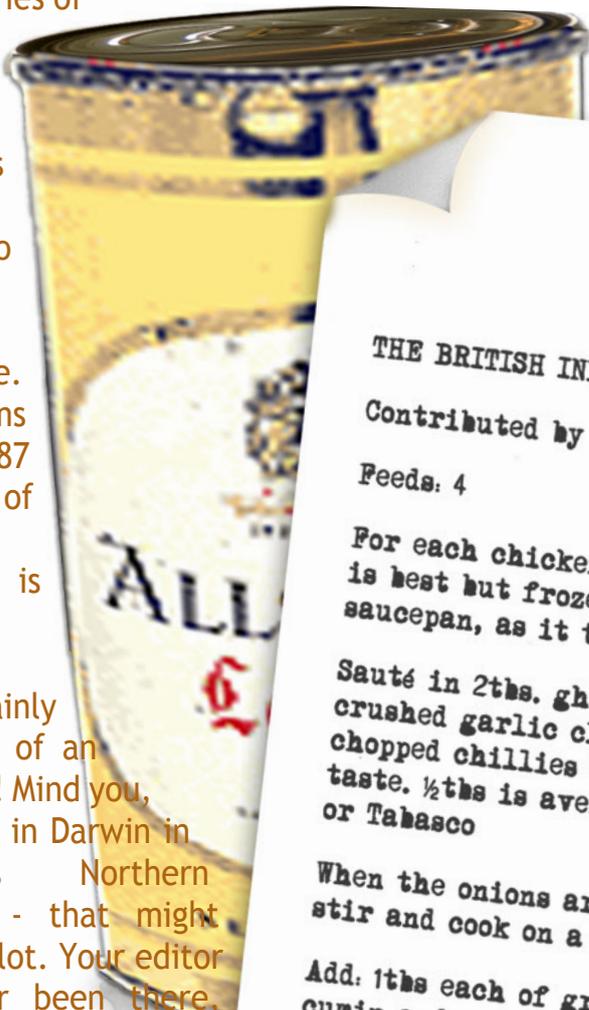
17.11.45 - New York. We arrived in this big city two days ago but my feelings about the place are too much for me to set down at present - perhaps I will try when we get back to sea. The Third officer Ian Crawford and I met two very nice girls in the Merchant Navy Officers Club and I am looking forward to meeting one of them again this evening. (June and I were married in England two and a quarter years later).
(We conclude Derek's letters in our next issue)



FROM THE GALLEY...



In response to many requests, we embark upon a series of famous BI curries. Your editor is very grateful to Mike Bowman for these. Mike claims to have 187 books of curries, which is probably excessive and certainly indicative of an obsession! Mind you, Mike lives in Darwin in Australia's Northern Territory - that might explain a lot. Your editor has never been there, but his daughter has and she reported having a most excellent time. Be that as it may, your editor's kitchen is now redolent with the smells of garam masala, cumin seeds, cardamoms, turmeric and the like - glorious! Mike recommends that we kick off with the definitive Sunday lunch chicken curry recipe as produced by the Purser on his trusty old Imperial typewriter. Finger lickin' good! Enjoy!



B-I Menu

THE BRITISH INDIA STEAM NAVIGATION CO. CHICKEN CURRY

Contributed by Pat Pattenden via Mike Bowman

Feeds: 4

For each chicken-medium size, 2½ lb-ish (fresh/free range is best but frozen will do). Use a big thick bottom saucepan, as it tends to catch and:

Sauté in 2tbs. ghee or veg. oil. 2 large chopped onions, 4 crushed garlic cloves, 1 tbs. crushed root ginger and chopped chillies (or crushed chillies from a jar) add to taste. ½tbs is average. DON'T use chilli sauce of any kind or Tabasco

When the onions are golden, add 4 large diced tomatoes, stir and cook on a medium heat for 5 minutes.

Add: 1tbs each of ground coriander, garam masala, ground cumin and 2tbs turmeric, salt to taste (1/2 to 1tsp average). Cook for 15 minutes, stirring regularly.

Cut the chicken into 8 or 9 pieces and add, including the neck and leaving the skin on the chicken. Bring gently to the boil and then reduce the heat to simmer and cover. There should be enough liquid from the masala and chicken, if not, add a very small quantity of chicken stock or water.

Cook on a low heat for 90 minutes, covered, stir gently occasionally. Serve with boiled basmati rice and pappadoms/pickles and a can of cold Allsops.

Pat Pattenden once cooked it for 120 people at one sitting! It freezes well and gets even nicer as a result. You can use chicken legs/fillets/bits from the supermarket but it's never as good as the whole bird for some reason - must be the bones!

FROM THE PICTURE ALBUM...

We thank Paul Mann for the attached photograph. Paul wrote to "... calling BI" when he recognised Cliff Ellis in the Queda photograph in a previous issue. Cliff was Passenger Liaison Officer on the *Uganda* in 1969 when Paul was deputy Purser. Paul obviously had an important job, checking up on the shoreside arrangements for ferrying passengers to and fro via the ship's launches. Hard at work is Andre Miles (2nd officer) with cap at rakish angle as usual, Mike Harradine (staff captain), John



Mennell (senior radio officer) and one other (can you identify him?). The other seated gentleman is probably the ship's agent in Ibiza. Your editor could not but note the bottles on the photographer's table!



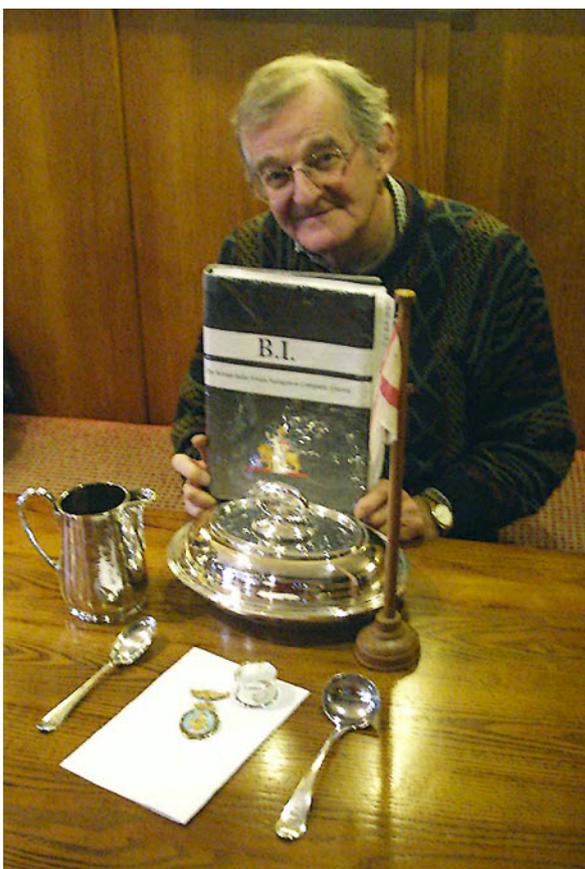
FROM THE MEMORY BOX...

Hard on the heels of our report of the mini reunion held at the Royal Oak Hotel in Appleby UK in the last issue of "... calling BI", Tony Hamnett writes in to tell us that David Mitchell brought with him a selection of memorabilia from his archives which provided interesting conjecture about their history.

Of particular interest was the tureen from the troopship *Dacca* minted in 1873. It was most likely to be from the first *Dacca* launched in 1867 but that ship was abandoned as a total loss in 1876 when it went aground on the Santipilly Shoal.

It is possible that the tureen was used on the second *Dacca* launched in 1882 but it also sank in 1890 after hitting the Daedalus reef in the Red Sea. Reluctantly we were forced to accept that just maybe a BI officer and

gentleman had purloined it, prompting discussion and many memories of items being taken into 'safe keeping' during trips to the breakers yard.



The silver tankard was marked 1874 from *Madura*. (1874 - 1912). It is known that Rudyard Kipling was aboard *Madura* on her maiden voyage so could it be that he drank from this very tankard? Though tempted we decided not to desecrate the memory by filling it with the Royal Oak's best ale.

FROM THE CONTAINER WORLD...

Will the box industry help make life better for (poor) shipowners?

WITH charter rates on the rocks and the shipping industry coming under increasing pressure to clean up on pollution and emissions, some new thinking is urgently needed to produce fuel savings and reduce costs. And the challenges are only going to get tougher.

Low demand for shipping and a large, overhanging orderbook of new tonnage mean the chances of profitable employment for a growing proportion of the world fleet will shrink. While there are improvements coming along in optimised hull forms, better propulsion units, economies of scale and improvements to propulsion and auxiliary machinery, what can be done to bring savings to the existing fleet and all the newbuildings which do not measure up to modern fuel economics?

Step in Peter Tang-Jensen, once executive vice-president of the famed Odense Staalskibsværft in Denmark and now senior vice president corporate technology at American Bureau of Shipping (ABS). He has been applying what ABS calls blue sky thinking - rather appropriate for an ex-A P Moller man - to the challenges facing the industry. In a lesson in lateral thinking, Mr Tang-Jensen is focusing some of his intellect on a matter which is not within the direct control of the shipowner, nor indeed the ship's classification society. He believes there is scope in the container trades for tooling up and producing an, until now, little-used form of the box. In the latest ABS house magazine, Mr Tang-Jensen says that a concerted

drive to improve containership fuel efficiency by optimising the design for a wider range of drafts and lower speeds appears logical but, he adds, there is scope to look at the cargo container too.



"The average loaded weight of a 20ft container is 10-12 tonnes which when empty weighs 2-2.25 tonnes, suggesting that 20-25% of payload carried is packaging. The largest class of box ships in service at the moment is therefore carrying some 20,000 tonnes of packaging when fully loaded, so the impact on efficiency could be considerable in terms of fuel consumption and emissions."



That potential for savings, though, is not the extent of Mr Tang-Jensen's thinking. He continues: "If a 3,000-4,000 teu vessel - a class which often carries substantial ballast to improve stability - could take advantage of the same weight reduction, perhaps also employing collapsible containers, the result could be a lowering of the [ship's] centre of gravity and a reduction in the necessary amount of ballast."

"Better knowledge of packaging composites is delivering weight reductions of 20-25% for recent prototypes - though design and production of an efficient and reliable collapsible container is a far greater challenge," Mr Tang-Jensen concedes.

Two factors seem important here. An attractive one is that these ideas could be applied immediately to all container vessels, new or old, with the potential for substantial savings. The other is that in order to achieve such savings, a deep level of commitment to the ideas would be required from container owners, cargo owners and shippers, whereas the direct benefits would flow exclusively to the shipowner or charterer. Will shipowners pass on savings sufficient to induce the box industry to invest in and use the new, lighter, more compact infrastructure? The jury hasn't even begun sitting.



FROM THE SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPT ...

A warm welcome to these new readers since our last issue:

ex-sea staff Peter Whitehead and Ralph Rhodes from Australia, Stuart Brown from Canada, Malcolm Henderson, John Coulthard, Alasdair MacIntosh and Graham Meek, all from UK and Mehmood Hussain, a BI passenger from Pakistan.

Young Tracey in our subscriptions department has pulled her nose from whatever trashy magazine she



currently reads long enough to tell us that she's getting bounced e-mails back from Paul Orwin in Brisbane in Australia, and Peter Dixon, also from Australia.

Does anybody know of the whereabouts of these two fine gentlemen?

She also informs your editor that "... calling BI" is currently read in at least 18 countries around the world, half of which she's never heard of and the other half she can't spell anyway. Where do we find them?



FROM THE READERS ...

Thanks to Geoff Woodland for news of an interesting project. It seems as an ambitious undertaking, but your editor does ask you to consider it seriously. Of course we would like to publish your stories within the pages of "... calling BI" as well. Your editor is likely to print anything you send (except scurrilous stories of what he got up to in Singapore).

'WHEN THE RED DUSTER STILL RULED THE WAVES: The Last Glory Days of the British Merchant Marine - 1945-1975 is a social/oral history project, the object of which is to record in print the reminiscences of the last generation to serve at sea - and ashore - with the British shipping companies, which, from

the early days of steam until the nineteen-fifties, sixties and in some cases seventies, traded their vessels to the far corners of the globe carrying all manner of cargoes and passengers.

What the eventual book that results from this project will seek to do is to collate the interviews and written submissions of as wide a cross-section as possible of former British merchant seafarers - deck and engine officers, and seamen, pursers staff, stewards, cooks and others in ancillary roles afloat - as well as a cross section of shore staff and passengers in order to record their stories for posterity - along with the background stories of the companies who employed them - and a little of the history of those times.

<http://redduster-lastglorydays.books.officelive.com/default.aspx>

FROM THE INTERNET (1) ...

While idly surfing on the Internet recently, your Editor's eye was obviously drawn to the following arresting headline.

Can BI get your business back in the black?

Lost trades mean lost business - and you cannot examine and manage what you cannot see or measure. Taking this point further, I contend that a business doesn't really know its market if it doesn't know it has lost trades

After all, the old shipping company knew a thing or two about lost trades, didn't it? Thinking that a renaissance was about to happen, he read on avidly. However, it was not what it seemed, not what your editor had

hoped. The key to enlightenment occurred in the fourth paragraph, which said that you apparently...

"had to define the discipline and develop the necessary system components to find something that was not just lost but invisible, and then put this new information into action and capitalise on it".

Yes, yet another American expert on "Business Intelligence" solving the problems of the world and leaving your editor brain dead.



FROM THE SOCIAL SCENE...

It may seem a long way away in time, but the big BI reunion in Newcastle needs to be confirmed if you are considering joining in the festivities. Bookings are going well, according to organiser Sue Spence, but there's always room for more. Your editor no doubt will be skulking in the corridors looking for people to buy him a drink. Be warned! An excellent programme of social events is planned, including a trip on the river. Past reunions have attracted around 200 people, so there's bound to be somebody you know, I'm sure. The event takes place from the 8th to 10th October. See <http://www.bishop.com/newcastle/index.htm> for further details. Who knows, your editor may point his camera in your direction and

you could achieve fame and immortality in subsequent issues of "...calling BI".



That bibulous band of BI brothers who reside in Essex and Suffolk are going to practice for the big reunion by meeting at their hostelry, the Thatcher's Arms, in Mount Bures on 28th May. Fellow festive friends are very welcome. Some find the East Anglian ales, excellent food (your editor recommends the pork belly roast), and wonderful scenery all too irresistible. You can join us by contacting [John Prescott](#), or indeed "[... calling BI](#)". The pub has just published its latest newsletter at

<http://www.thatchersarms.co.uk>

Your editor is always pleased to publicise any other similar events taking place around the world (usually seeking a free invite for himself), just let us know.

FROM THE HISTORY BOOKS ...

Your editor has received a communication recently from Paul Millmore, requesting information on the Bombay Coast and River Steam Navigation

Company. He is particularly interested in when it was formed, how long it lasted, whether it was taken over or did it sink without trace? Can anybody help? The only information your editor can find is that BISN bought the 1865-built "Medina" in 1874 from that company, later selling it in 1888.

FROM THE INTERNET (2) ...

A heartrending little scene has played itself out on the Internet, which involves the sea rescue of a dog. The full story can be seen at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-wyRU339FU>
Your editor hopes a similar fate doesn't befall any of his other BI sea-dog friends. Just be careful the next time you say "walkies...!" to your canine friend.

FROM THE KIDDERPORE DOCK...



A little scene of honest endeavour from your editor's photograph album.

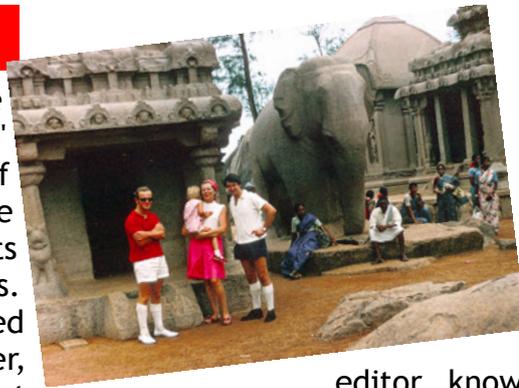


FROM THE TOURIST OFFICE...

Your editor was impressed with the response to the "Where Are We Now" competition in the last edition of "...calling BI". The Temple complex where your editor trod gently in his desert boots was in Mahabalipuram, south of Madras. Mind you, apparently they are now called Mamallapuram and Chennai. Whatever, quite a lot of you got the answer correct and no doubt our Prize Department is raining munificence upon you. Congratulations!

Courtesy of Gordon Thornton, we have an easy-ish place for you to identify this issue. Your editor fully expects Tom Kelso to come bursting into the "... calling BI" mailbox with a correct answer, but don't let that put off the rest of you. Please email your answers to our usual address by clicking on any logo.

Should anybody else have any photographs of slightly obscure places for this section of our



newsletter, please send them in. The more the merrier! But please let your editor know where they have been taken -- he's easily mystified.



FROM THE PROMS CONCERTS...

On the BIship website recently, there was mention of the Last Night of the Proms. This brought to mind a item your editor noticed during a visit to Julian Stockwin's website, <http://www.julianstockwin.com>. Julian is a novelist of great renown, with impressive knowledge and background information for seafaring facts and tales, mainly within the naval tradition. He comes up with this piece on a famous old song:

One of the most popular marches of the Royal Navy was composed by a patriotic landlubber, the poet James Thomson. It was set to music by Thomas Arne and first played in 1740 in a masque called "Alfred",

performed at Cliveden, country home of Frederick, Prince of Wales, written in honour of Princess Augusta. It soon developed a life of its own, however, separate from the masque and was first heard in London in 1745. It was taken up by the Royal Navy and often played by the marine band before ships sailed into battle.

The original words of the first verse of Thomson's work were -

"When Britain first at Heaven's command
Arose from out the azure main
This was the charter of the land
And guardian angels sung this strain
Rule, Britannia, rule the waves!
Britons never will be slaves"

