



News of the BSN 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...

The latest attempt of summer here in the UK is now beginning to fade into distant memory and debates as to whether it is too early yet to switch on the central heating are beginning to resound. Time then to curl up with our latest issue of your newsletter.

We were pleased to receive the latest issue of *The Navigator*, produced by the Nautical Institute in association with the Royal Institute of Navigation. The fourth in the series, this free booklet discusses the need for position fixing in this day and age of GPS. It is available free of charge by clicking on this [link](#).

When your editor was a lowly cadet, cleaning out bilges and the like, he often mused upon his position in life. Now the Panama Maritime Authority has cleared his mind by deciding that a cadet is not a seafarer (and therefore not protected by the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention) but in fact "an aspiring merchant marine officer whose training programme include the improvement of academic and professional skills, as well as the

formation of attitudes and behaviours under the observance of strict compliance of rules and regulations and existing orders". Now he knows!

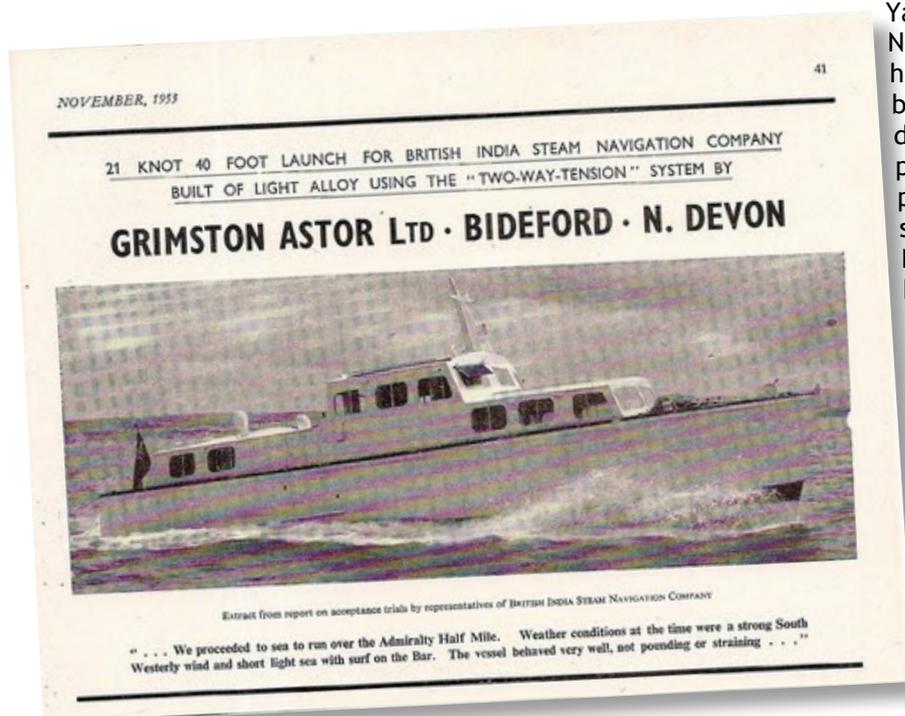
Once again the Mission to Seamen are appealing for help for their work on Woolly Hat Day, October 25th. Further details can be had from [Rebecca Watson](#). Your editor will be digging out his very disreputable headgear!

Whilst on the subject of headgear, we imagine that very hard hats would have been needed at the recent launch of a freefall lifeboat, which apparently has won the world record for the highest launch. Before watching this [movie](#), just remember "it's not the falling that hurts you, but the sudden stop at the end..."!

We trust that we have put together an interesting issue for you, with a variety of stories and photographs - some old favourites, some new, which have tickled our fancy. We are always on the lookout for more photographs, particularly for the "Where Are We Now" quiz. Many thanks to the various contributors to this issue as always. Please enjoy...

FROM THE AUCTION SITES...

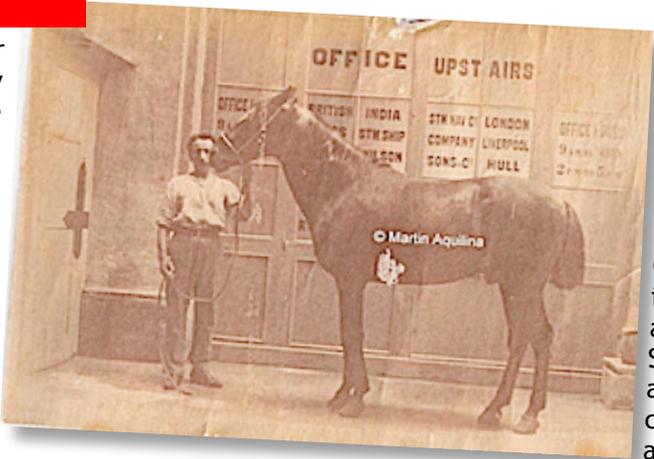
An intriguing little item culled from the Internet auctions this month. This advert was clipped from the *Motor Boat and Yachting* magazine of November 1955. Your editor has no further information, but he assumes that it was destined for one of the passenger ships for ferrying passengers to and from the shore (possibly the *Nevasa*?). Does any reader have further knowledge of this boatyard or know of any reason why BSN would want a 21 knot launch in the first place. It does look a lovely little runabout, doesn't it?





FROM THE BISHIP LOGBOOK...

After our little flurry of horse related articles over last few months, your editor's eyes were inevitably to the following entry from Martin Aquilina in the Logbook section of the Biship website recently. He that "I have a photo dating to the 1890s which has reversed to be able to read the names on the glass large door. The names showing are: British India Stm London, Stm Ship Co. Liverpool and Wilson Sons & Would you be able to tell me if there was an agent for the above mentioned companies and the office (It is known that BI's Malta agent in 1904 was Mr T E The agency was later to become Thos E Smith & Son C Smith & Son, although BI did not always keep that as its Malta agent (at times in the 20th century, the passed a Mr Burt and a Mr Messenger but eventually came back to the Smith family). Latterly, Thos



the drawn

states been of a Nav Co. Co. Hull. in Malta address. Smith. and Thos company agency

C Smith was at 12 St Christopher Street, Valletta. The third company named on the door is almost certainly Thomas Wilson and Sons Co, a Hull shipowner. Part of that company later became Ellerman Wilson Line. From dates of incorporation and operation of BI and TW&S the photo is probably from between 1862 and 1916 - Editor, Biship website). Mr Aquilina doesn't question the relevance of the horse in the photograph, saying that "the probability is that the horse is in the ground floor warehouse of the agent and is being shown to some people." But you editor is relieved to note that the office is upstairs. Perhaps readers of "... calling BI" can shed some light on this conundrum.



FROM THE CRUISE SHIP SCENE...



Inevitably again, we have to look at the cruise ship industry. The *Allure of the Seas*, officially the largest behemoth of its type, has some pretty impressive statistics. Your editor found this on one of the websites he scours regularly for your benefit

- 225,282 grt
- 1,187 feet (362 meters) long
- 215 feet (66 meters) wide
- 213 feet (65 meters) high from the water line
- 30 feet (9.1 meters) draft
- 22 knots cruising speed
- 16 passenger decks, 24 passenger elevators
- 4 bow thrusters with 7,500 horse power each
- 5,400 guests (double occupancy), 6,318 guests total, 2,706 staterooms. (We assume that "guests" actually mean "passengers": Ed)

- 2,384 crew (from approximately 80 countries)

On a recent vacation aboard the cruise ship, a passenger took a tour of the ship's facilities (at a cost of approximately \$150) and documented the entire experience. they uploaded a comprehensive 104-picture gallery where you can see not only the 'behind the scenes' areas but the main areas and rooms as well.

To see the entire album, check out <http://imgur.com/a/HJ5Md>



Whilst we are on the subject, you editor was pleased to receive this striking comparison with a somewhat smaller ship - it is, of course, the *Titanic*. We wonder which one will be remembered the longest.





FROM THE FAMILY HISTORY BOOK...

We were pleased to receive recently the following email from Bernadette Jones, who writes: "my father, Tom Hand, who sailed with BISN Co during the last war was 90 on September 28th and I know he would love it if this could be acknowledged be acknowledged in some way by the BI group, of which he is a member. I think he must be one of the last remaining engineer mariners who sailed with the fleet during that period. He loved sincerely and I know that part of his heart was left behind on the Sofala, Amra and Itinda. My life and now my daughters and granddaughters has been made richer by the wonderful tales he told us of bravery, companionship and sometimes comedy that brought him through it all."

We sent congratulations to Mr Hand and a copy of "... calling BI". We have his address and are happy to pass it on to anybody who remembers him or who would like to contact him.

FROM THE SOCIAL WHIRL...

A very welcome visitor to your editor's favourite haunt recently was Roger Linbird, who has featured occasionally in these pages. Roger, who currently resides in Bali, was taking an occasional trip to UK mainly I think to laugh at our grey weather. He served as a radio officer on the *Dunera* and *Uganda*. He took these photographs of Mike King, Tom Allard, John Prescott, Barry Fleetwood and presumably the local village idiot during what turned out to be a typical BI lunch. Oh dear! Was this why Roger was taking pictures of himself in the gents?

He also met up with Mike Wheeler, who took him sailing on his yacht, the *Golden Fleece* (which featured in issue number 23 of December 2010). Mike observes that it had been 44 years since we had all seen him. I'm sure none of us have changed a bit!





FROM THE HISTORY BOOKS...

We are sure that the navigators amongst us know much of the history of the difficulty in finding longitude at sea and inventing the perfect ship's chronometer. However, in this day and age of satnavs and GPS, it is still salutary to recall the problems and trials and tribulations that existed in the 18th century. A short film is available in Cambridge University's Digital Library, with Prof Simon Schaffer looking at some of the ideas that failed and the timepiece credited with providing the solution.

This can be seen at the BBC magazine site, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-23514521>

FROM THE HEART...

We are indebted to that fine e-zine, Bow Wave, produced by Sam Ignarski for the following poem written by Barry Youde, reflecting as it does that which must be in the thoughts of many of your editor's friends at this stage in our lives.

The Allotted Span

Three score years plus ten: all things which follow are a bonus.
The allotted span for men: what is the meaning, please, of onus?
Life has given all its gifts. All pleasures are unwrapped;
All weights and balances and lifts; and nothing now is trapped.

The devil take the hindmost: I've been idle. I have striven.
And where I have been blindmost, may I please now be forgiven?
Guide me, O, Thou Great Redeemer, in my foolish ways.
Truly, I am but a dreamer. What is curse or praise?

Grant good health to those I cherish, those I know as friends.
May their kindness never perish. May I make amends
For every trespass I have made, there have been far too many.
In others, may I please pretend I have not noticed any?

Grant me life while I have work: grant work while I have life.
Grant me strength to cater for my family and wife.
May they learn as I was taught; and may they learn much more;
And may they know the gap between the moral and the law.

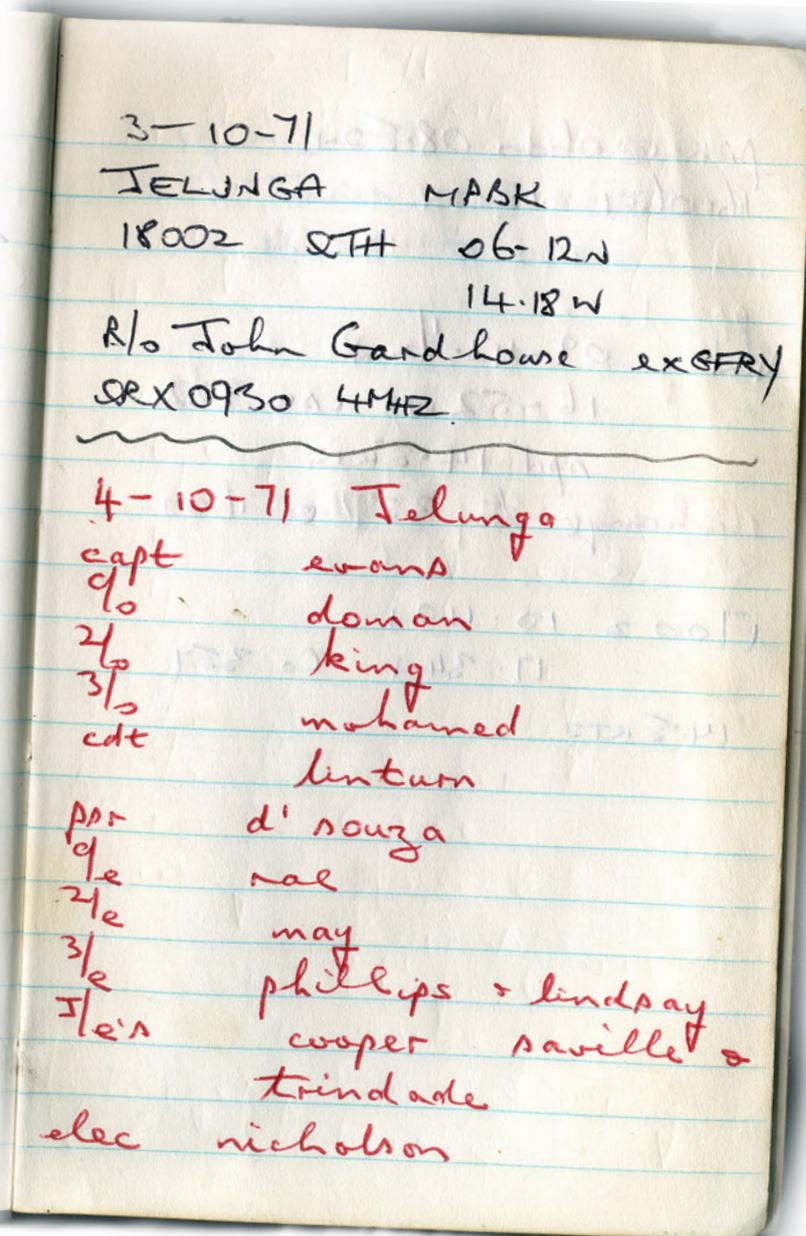
And may they laugh where I have laughed and love where I have loved;
And may they not sit in the draft; nor yield when they are shoved.
May they be as awkward, born into the Awkward Squad,
And know all footsteps forward should be where the Saints have trod?





FROM THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK...

Once again we are pleased to feature another crew list from the seemingly inexhaustible collection from David Hammond. We must have run about 30 of these altogether, and still they show no signs of giving out. If we didn't know better, it would seem to be that he did nothing but collect these lists during all his radio watches. We're not complaining, of course. It all brings back many pleasant memories.



FROM THE HEIGHTS...

And yet another bastion of our marine life of yesterday has had to bow to seemingly inevitable change. We received this rather plaintive little press release recently. Where will it all end?

A newspaper that began life 279 years ago as a notice pinned to a London coffee shop wall will, from the end of the year, be available only online. The last print publication of Lloyd's List. A survey carried out earlier this year found that only 25 (sic) of its customers used the print edition alone. Editor Richard Meade said it was "just a natural part of our evolution".

He said the aim had changed little since 1734, when the notice was first pinned to that coffee shop wall offering customers shipping news and information. "We haven't changed that much. But now [customers] can access us in any coffee shop in the world," he added.

Mr Meade said that while nostalgia weighed on the company's shoulders, customers paid a premium for information and did not want to wait for it to come by post.

Lloyd's List was founded by Edward Lloyd, who posted details of ship arrivals, departures and casualties on the wall of his coffee shop for the benefit of London's 18th century maritime community.





FROM THE COMPETITION DEPARTMENT...

We offer what is probably our hardest question yet in our popular "Where Are We Now?" competition. So in order to make it just a little bit easier, we copy some extracts from the description of the illustration. Can you guess where it is? Email your suggestions to callingbinews@btinternet.com, where our girl Friday, Tracy, is sitting all agog to receive your communications. Please don't disappoint her - she will be hell to live with if you do.



This original woodblock engraving shows a massive rock standing almost 500 feet above the water and ships ferrying cargo to the docks

This engraving was published in the July 15, 1853 edition of *Gleason's Pictorial*, a weekly news magazine similar in format to *Harper's Weekly* and *The Illustrated London News*. It is accompanied by a short article on work in progress by the British to fortify the town and harbour.

When this engraving was printed, this port was governed as part of British India. Its location was approximately equidistant from the Suez Canal, Mumbai and Zanzibar, which were all important British possessions. the port was an entrepôt and way-station for sailors from the mid-19th century to the late 20th century.

FROM THE FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM...



Thanks to Simon Morgan for this photograph of the *Karapara* flaunting her flags in fine fashion. We are not quite sure just where this photograph was taken - any ideas? - but we are pleased to note she seems to be a happy ship here, despite her somewhat chequered career, as related by Laxon & Perry.



FROM THE PASSIVE SMOKING DEPT...

It would seem that there was no lack of volunteers to aid two ships recently on fire in the Mediterranean. First up was the Tanzanian registered cargo ship mv *Gold Star*. According to Italy's Guardia di Finanzia, she caught fire on 6 September some 30 miles north of Malta. The twist to the story is that she seems to have been loaded with some 30 tons of cannabis, possibly provoking the armada of ships dispatched by the Armed Forces of Malta to help subdue the flames, or maybe just to hang out downwind. Two days later a second ship, MV *Luna-S*, also Tanzanian flagged, caught fire after being intercepted, this time by the French Navy. An eventual inspection confirmed a large quantity of marijuana on board but could not determine how much was being smuggled.

Your editor does not smoke.



FROM THE GALLEY...

It has never been possible to separate the seafaring life from the delights of the galley and food in general. Your editor is indebted to the Watchkeeper, the house magazine of BIMCO, for the following:

Armies are supposed to "march on their stomachs" and it is undoubtedly true that a happy ship tends to be one which has a competent cook. But while regulators have mandated competencies and skills for most people aboard ship, it is only with the arrival of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 that we have a range of new catering standards for food and drinking water aboard ship, and specific requirements for quantity, quality, nutritional value and variety, along with strict rules for hygiene.

Most good operators recognise fully the value of good food, ensuring that people with the right skills are employed and that the stores and ingredients are of the best. But everyone can do with some help from time to time and the arrival of the MLC 2006 will ensure that catering issues are areas which will be subject to inspection. So it is timely that the training organisation and BIMCO partner Videotel has now produced a series of training aids covering all aspects of catering aboard ship. Undertaken with the co-operation of Garrets International Ltd, the series is aimed at catering departments aboard ship, although masters, senior officers, crew members, and indeed those who store ships will gain from this course. There are ten parts to this series, each accompanied by an electronic workbook and facilities to assess the effectiveness of the lessons.

The master's inspection of the galley may have been a regular part of the weekly routine aboard well-run ships, but now becomes a far more formalised procedure. With attention being paid to hygiene, attire, record keeping and stock rotation, the inspections must be properly recorded with due attention to hazard analysis and critical control point principles. There is perhaps more to the inspection than might meet the eye and one part of the series is devoted to this area, which doubtless inspectors will home in on. Other parts of the series include menu planning and cost control, management and record keeping along with healthy eating guidelines, the first helping to train the caterers in meeting the crew's cultural, religious, medical and individual needs. Documentation is an important part of the MLC 2006 and will be subject to inspection.

The crew itself can benefit from guidance on healthy eating and useful advice is provided. There are separate parts on product knowledge designed for cooks and encouraging them to create more varied menus, along with a section which deals with both mandatory and optional galley equipment. With regard to the cooking skills there is a part devoted to the making of basic stocks, soups and sauces and a range of recipes. Other parts deal with wet and dry heat cooking and the series concludes with a part devoted to bread making.

Seafarers often joke about their cooks and their skills, but this series demonstrates that food is important, not something that can be taken lightly, but is also now required to comply with international regulations. It is an integral part of health and welfare aboard ship and needs to be treated as such.

Which reminds me - isn't it about time we had some more recipes? Send in your favourites, even if they're not strictly off the BI menu.





FROM THE SOCIAL CALENDAR...

As usual, September saw the gathering of the BI engineering clans in Glasgow for their annual meet. This year saw a goodly turn out with 51 attending. New to the proceedings were John Hughes from Monmouth, Dave Ledger from Durham and Rodney Varney. Derek Easman's contribution to the proceedings was much appreciated by all. A few senior faces were missing and they were much in our thoughts, together with those who had passed over the bar in the last 12 months.

Next year we gather the same venue, the Mercure Glasgow City hotel (if it hasn't changed its name yet again!), Ingram Street on **11th September 2014**. This is in fact a week earlier than normal. Our usual Thursday have been appropriated for the little matter of deciding on independence for Scotland.



Norman Winder, Hugh McIntyre, Colin Fletcher



John Quinn, Rodney Varney, Dennis Watson



Brian Walker, John Pinder, John Leigh, John Handley

And now another date for your diary:

The BIERs are getting their appetites sharpened again for a get-together at their local The Thatchers Arms on **Friday 29th November**. A welcome awaits all BI staff, partners and friends in convivial surroundings - and Christmas will not be mentioned! Please contact [John Prescott](#) to let him know if you are coming. Directions to the pub can be had from their [website](#), whilst pick-up from local railway stations can be organised.

