



Issue no: 9

JULY 2009

News of British India, its ships and staff, the history and 'histoires', of ships and sealing wax, nautical natters and a miscellany of maritime musings

available free of charge by application to callingBI@biship.com

FROM THE EDITOR

We assume, Dear Reader, that at some stage you have set up lines of dominoes, so that when the first one is knocked down, all the others eventually fall over in logical sequence. This sums up your editor's home life over the last three or four weeks. It started with an offhand comment. "You really must touch up those paint chips in the skirting board". Thus a totally logical sequence has led to cropping of central heating pipes, laying a new floor, totally gutting your editor's study and extensive rewiring of the electrics, etc etc. Your editor applauds his Nearest and Dearest's attempts to make him tidy but fears the worst...

Whilst not wishing to bore you with his domestics, this is by way of explanation of the inordinate length of time since our last issue of "... calling BI". We reward your patience with another five-page issue full of goodies. We must start with sacks full of thanks: first to Barrie Sanderson for producing a marvellous tome on the "Nevasa", which your editor is devouring nightly (If you wish to buy a copy, please contact Barrie by letter *Tether's End, Old London Road, Rawreth, Wickford, Essex SS11 8UE*, telephone (00 44) 01268 769583 or email at ssnevasa@aol.com; secondly to David Humphreys, for his wonderful gesture at the north Essex BI get-together (David also brought along a marvellous extract from the last Minute Book of BI board meetings - fascinating reading); next, thanks

to Gordon Thornton for sending us some copies of BI News, rescued from a "tidying up" operation - we will be serving up extracts from these in future issues; thanks also to DPH for the "Chantala" crew list; and lastly, (but by no means least) thanks to James Slater and Chris Wright for photographs from the Manchester mini-reunion. Unfortunately, space does not allow us to report on the recent north Essex gathering. A most convivial meeting yet again, and hopefully we'll have photographs in our next issue of "... calling BI".

James reminds me to tell you the next annual reunion of BI Retired Engineers Association will be held in the Buchanan Suite at the **Ramada Glasgow City Hotel**, which is situated on Ingram Street, Glasgow. The reunion date is Thursday, **17th September 2009**. The cost of luncheon will be £26.00; further details can be had from James on james.slater@zen.co.uk but bookings should be made as soon as possible. We will carry reports and photographs from the meeting.

With all this conviviality going on, it's only right therefore that we should offer congratulations to our indefatigable website moderator, John Prescott, for gaining his first son-in-law.

Our usual "where are we now?" spot is a bit easier this issue. Thanks again to Tony Lister. Answers to "...callingBI" for the usual prizes. See 'Forgotten Dreams' on page 4.

Later in this issue...

FROM THE READERS...

FROM THE TAKING ACTION CREW...

FROM THE FORGOTTEN DREAMS DEPT...

FROM THE BUNKERING POINT...

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To send in your views, notes, photos, brickbats or spare gold bars, please click on any "...callingBI" logo

FROM THE READERS...

Following the 'Soapbox' piece in the last issue of "... calling BI", which called for a more exact use of maritime language and attention to the details that identifies our chosen industry, we have received the following two responses:

From Keith R Gillette of Archer Norris in California:

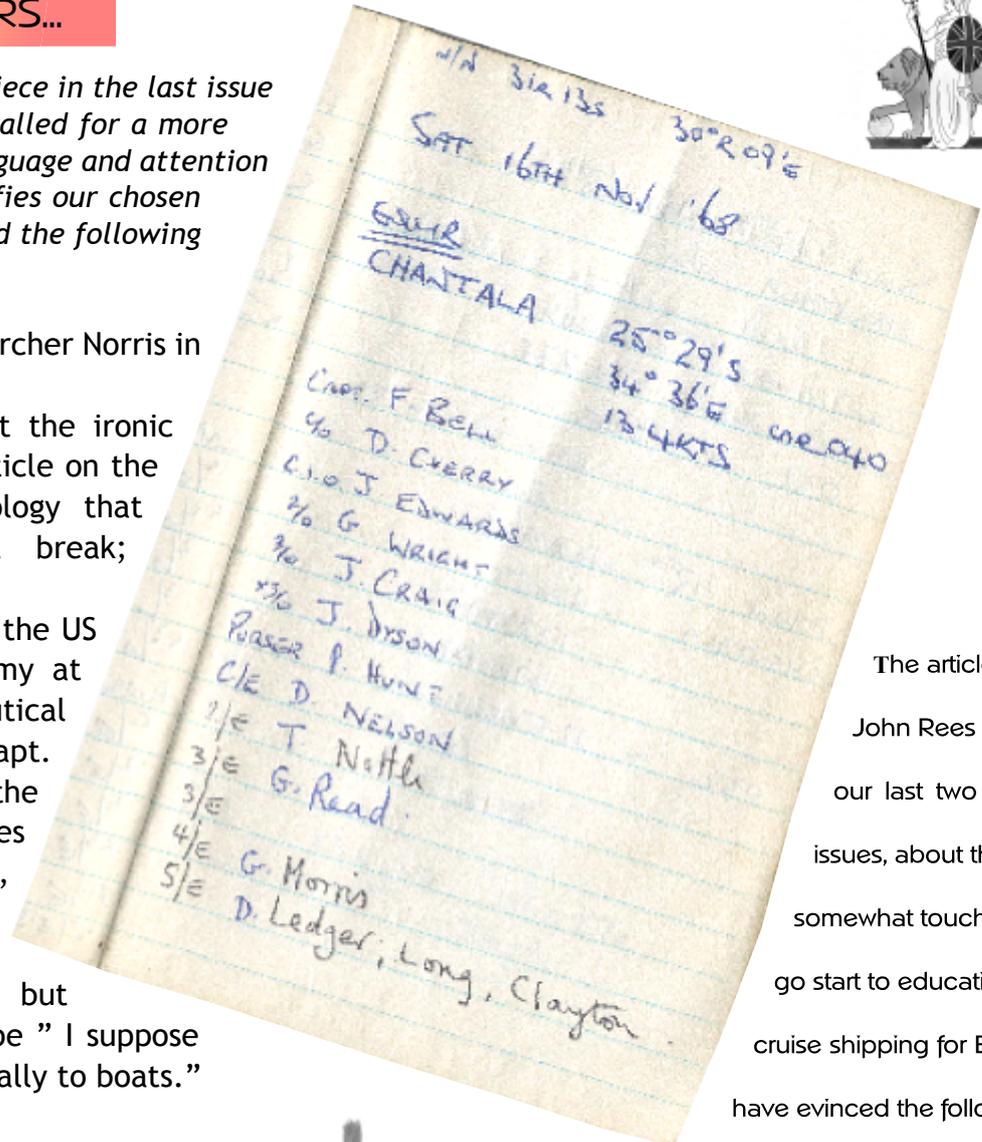
"I read with amusement the ironic comment within your article on the correct use of terminology that "Maritime ropes don't break; correctly, they part."

During my plebe year at the US Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, my nautical science professor, Capt. Douglas Hard, reminded the class no less than 100 times that "farmers use ropes, ships use lines. You may find sheets, lines, or hawsers aboard a ship, but you will never find a rope " I suppose that concept applies equally to boats."

But from Barry Thompson in Auckland, we have a reply. "I agree Keith Gillette makes a good point generally about 'ropes' and about his professor's contention that there are no ropes aboard ship although I must disagree that there are none at all. This is not correct.

A merchant ship will usually carry a boat rope for towing a lifeboat or other small boat, usually alongside and adjacent to a ship's side boarding ladder/pilot ladder. I could cite one or two respected book references to support this. Sailing ships and craft also have a bolt-rope sewn onto the edges of their sails – even more references for this. Finally my friend Malcolm Rushan has reminded me that there is also a bell rope. Often referred to as a bell's lanyard (and often of fancy ropework) it is also correctly called a bell rope.

However, as a general rule it is true that ropes aboard ship generally go all by a specialist name"



The articles by John Rees in our last two issues, about the somewhat touch and go start to educational cruise shipping for BI, have evinced the following

from Dave Mitchell:

"I did two spells with The BI on the coast 1967-1974 as an E/O. I do have a passion for The BI and collect anything I can find. Further reading of "calling BI" sent me to my files and a circular issued on 16 January 1969 gave details of loadings from Dunera's first cruise in 1961 to those of Nevasa and Uganda in 1968. Dunera carried 1436 cabin and 8268 dormitory passengers over 16 cruises. By 1965 the numbers had shot up to exceed 37000 over 41 cruises and by 1968 a similar programme carried nearly 49000."



FROM THE TAKING ACTION CREW...

Your editor came across the following account in the web pages of merchantrnavyofficers.com, a highly recommended website

Robert Lyle was born in January 1867 in Paisley, Scotland and died about 1921 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He served for about 13 years with BI, leaving after he contracted malaria on one of his journeys. This highly coloured account of the Company's expansion policy leaves your editor gasping and somewhat glad that he wasn't a shipmate of Mr Lyle! More to follow in later issues.

On a wild, blustering night in December in the year 1888, I was one of a party of young Scotsmen who left St. Enoch's Station, Glasgow, on our way to London en route for the East.

Most of us had been out before and were returning, as we thought, to Calcutta or Bombay, where we had plenty of friends and plenty of interests awaiting us. We had all been enjoying a thorough good holiday in the old home land, among old, familiar scenes and faces, but now we were glad once more, with light hearts and still lighter pockets, to turn our faces towards the Southern Cross, all eager for fresh adventures and pastures new. There were eight of us - all Scottish - seven engineers and one a medical man, poor Dr. Charters, of whom I shall speak later on.

All eight were engaged in the service of the British India Steam Navigation Company, then, as now, one of the largest and most important steam boat companies in the world.

This company is the survivor of the celebrated East India Company (*Not QUITE true!* - Editor), which was chartered by Queen Elizabeth for purposes of trading in the East in the year 1600, and which has played no small part in the foundation of our British Indian Empire. It was commonly called the 'Old John' company, but owing to mal-administration on its part it was dissolved after the Indian Mutiny, which it bore the blame of helping to bring about. It then resolved itself into a simple trading company; very wealthy, and almost entirely under Scottish management. Our company was at this time under the direction of the late Sir William Mackinnon, a man of great force of character and calculating powers. I have never met a man who impressed me more with the power of his abilities, and the depth of his wisdom. He was a canny Scot - but he was something more - a man capable of administration both for present and future times. The British India Company owe much to the energy and foresight of Sir William Mackinnon. By the way, it is his brother, Peter, who by his recent death,

had enriched the Free Church of Scotland, or as they are now called the 'Wee Frees', to the extent of £20,000.

In addition to being Chairman of the British India Company at the time of which I speak, Sir William was also Director of the Imperial East African Company, in which he took a deep interest, and it is largely due to him that Central Africa is open to civilization at the present day. He is only one of the many Scotsmen who have become famous for helping to found and consolidate the power of the British Empire, both in Africa and in the East Indies.

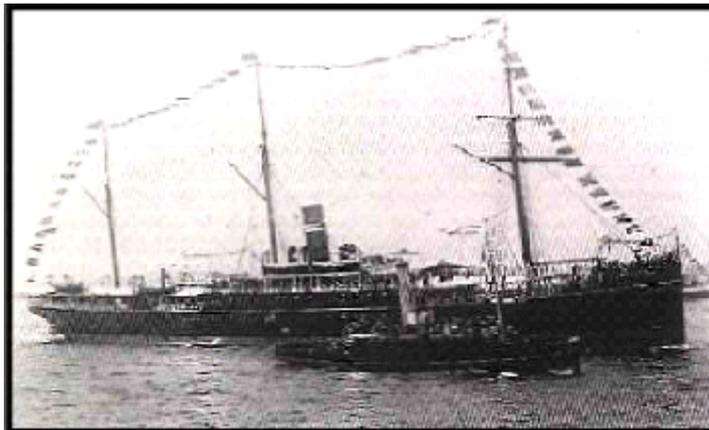
I need not say that we young men were all proud to belong to the British India Company, and no more loyal subjects of Queen Victoria ever left our shores, all anxious to distinguish ourselves for the honour of the British Flag. On arriving in London we proceeded as passengers on board the good ship "Goorkha", which left the Royal Albert Docks next day with no lighter hearts than ours on board. I well remember the derision

with which we witnessed the tearful partings from weeping relatives of the other passengers, and to add to the bustle and confusion of the sailing of a big ship, we moved out of the docks in a terrific snow

storm which nothing daunted our high flow of spirits, but rather increased them.

Having dropped our Pilot at Dungeness, we were out two days without incident, when we encountered very heavy weather in the Bay of Biscay. Indeed the sea ran so high that all passengers were obliged to remain below. This was no deprivation as most, except ourselves, were too sick to come on deck. On the second night when I was trying to get some sleep, and could hear on all sides nothing but the groans of my fellow-passengers, calling out, in language more emphatic than polite, either for death or morning, word came up to our cabin that the chains of the steering gear had broken and our ship was left helpless in the trough of the sea.

More in our next issue ...and how!



FROM THE FORGOTTEN DREAMS DEPT...

Sad to say no reader was successful in identifying the Seamen's Mission building in issue 7. Perhaps the delights of King's Cross in Sydney proved too strong for some of you! For indeed it was the Mission in Sydney in 1967 that we portrayed. Just to jog your memories, for your editor is sure that you must have been to at least one Saturday night dance there, is the photograph again.



FROM THE BUNKERING POINT...

No two fuels are exactly the same, writes Chris Hewer. Quality can change depending on the crude oil and feedstock from which the fuel is derived, on the type of processing it receives at the refinery and on the way it is stored, blended and delivered to ships. At one time, shipowners used not to worry unduly about the quality of the fuel they were buying. But in the 1980s, in response to a steady deterioration in the quality of bunkers, the first dedicated fuel testing agencies started to appear. Such agencies play a vital role today in determining whether fuel is fit to burn or just another hostage to arbitration or litigation. It is now standard practice to send a bunker sample off for laboratory analysis. But the problems do not always end there. Owners and charterers still have to understand the results, appreciate the implications, and know what it is reasonable to expect and possible to accept. In this way, they can avoid costly mistakes. A new book from Petrosport seems likely to help. 'An Introduction to Fuel Analysis' is written by Nigel Draffin, who has forgotten more about bunkers than

most of us know. And Nigel has forgotten nothing in his new book, which explains in a bright, simple and effective way the importance of knowing the fuels you are dealing with.

The book contains a wealth of information that will enable everyone from the newcomer to the old hand to understand bunker fuels and what they contain, how to test each key parameter and what the test results actually mean, and what happens when problem results appear.

The book includes numerous detailed diagrams, tables, charts and photographs which will help anyone who has any doubts about what can be found in marine fuels and, once found, what to do about it. There are also useful appendices detailing places to go for help, lists of abbreviations and a multilingual glossary of the words and terms most often found in fuel test analysis reports.

To order a copy of the book, which is priced at £39.95 / \$79.95 / €49.95 + carriage, go to http://www.petrosport.com/books-fuel_analysis.asp

FROM THE FINANCIAL MARKETS...

CEO -- Chief Embezzlement Officer.

CFO -- Corporate Fraud Officer.

BULL MARKET -- A random market movement causing an investor to mistake himself for a financial genius.

BEAR MARKET -- A 6 to 18 month period when the kids get no allowance, the wife gets no jewellery and the husband gets no sex.

VALUE INVESTING -- The art of buying low and selling lower.

P/E RATIO -- The percentage of investors wetting their pants as the market keeps crashing.

BROKER -- What my broker has made me.

STANDARD & POOR -- Your life in a nutshell.

STOCK ANALYST -- Idiot who just downgraded your stock.

STOCK SPLIT -- When your ex-wife and her lawyer split your assets equally between themselves.

FINANCIAL PLANNER -- A guy whose phone has been disconnected.

MARKET CORRECTION -- The day after you buy stocks.

CASH FLOW -- The movement your money makes as it disappears down the toilet.

YAHOO -- What you yell after selling it to some poor sucker for \$240 per share.

WINDOWS -- What you jump out of when you're the sucker who bought Yahoo @ \$240 per share.

INSTITUTIONAL INVESTOR -- Past year investor who's now locked up in a nuthouse.

PROFIT -- An archaic word no longer in use.



FROM O'CONNOR'S...



As all jazz fans know, the 30th of June marks the birthday of Buddy Rich, the famous drummer. The event this year saw a motley crew of good buddies gathered in Manchester to bang the drum about their life and times in BI. Organised by the redoubtable Mike Feltham at Waxy O'Connor's, these photographs show the wonderful chat around the bars on many BI ships still has a place in our lives. Signing on for the voyage were Brian Warburton, Chris Wright, Tony Lister (responsible for many photographs featured in the pages of "...calling BI") Dave Mitchell, James Slater, John Leigh, Gooney(sekera), Brian Walker, John Quinn, Arthur Dawson, Robert Vaughan, Ken Beadle, Tony Hamnet and Mike Feltham himself. They certainly know how to enjoy themselves! And obviously James Slater really liked Dave Mitchell's shirt for some strange reason!



Rumour has it that a repeat event will be happening next year. If so, we'll bring you the news!

