

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...

After a prolonged absence due mainly to reasons vocational (Mrs Editor insisted on a holiday yet again - Iceland, since you ask) and vocational (arranging a small exhibition of some of your Editor's photographs - only two sold, since you ask), our little contribution to the world of BISN Co appears again.

August 2010 is an auspicious date in the history of the shipping company. Fifty years ago, One Aldgate received the telex that said the troop shipping contract was not being renewed. To plug the income loss the directors determined that the troop ships would be converted to educational cruise liners, as previously operated in the 1930's. Thus began a new venture which eventually grabbed the imagination of schools throughout the UK and led to an innovative programme which serves as an impetus for much of modern day cruising. Some of the trials and tribulations of the birth of the venture were featured in "...calling BI" issues 4 *et seq* by our good friend John Rees.

Talking of innovation, your Editor is aware of the pace of change of modern technologies, what with I-pods and I-pads, Smartphones and smart cards and the like. Admittedly, some of this leaves us cold, but we do try to keep up, not that the offspring believe this. So, when out shopping the other day, your Editor seized with delight an opportunity to plunge into this maelstrom of high-tech and bought an article not normally included in Silicon Valley's latest. When he returned home, the said offspring pointed out the now sadly obvious fact that "Unique Dynamic Waistband" did not put your Editor at the forefront of sartorial technology.

We also unashamedly include again the last page of our previous issue, as we will continue to do until the actual draw at the UK BI reunion in Newcastle in October. We are holding a raffle to boost the funds of a maritime charity and we are sure you will want to participate. The prizes are redolent with BI history and if nothing else, they will provide a good talking point in the evenings ahead.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES....

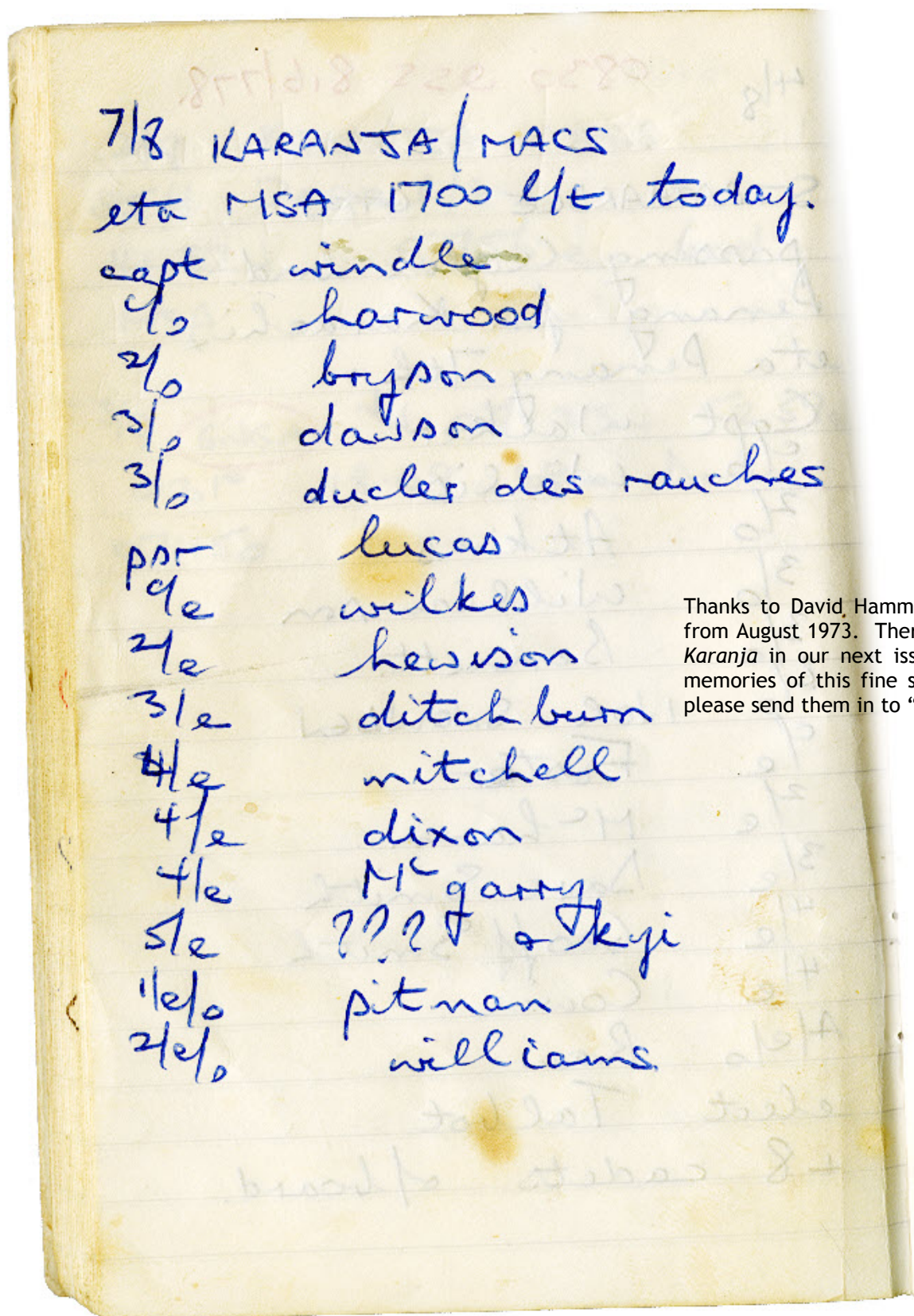


A reader saw this old photograph up for sale on Ebay recently, but cannot identify the ship. Can anybody help? A cursory glance at your Editor's Laxon and Perry suggests that it may be our old friend the *Matiana*, but if so, the picture is not half as good as the jigsaw version - see our last page.

## FROM THE GUESSING GAME...



There can't have been too many readers who failed to spot the various clues that "Said" where this photo from our last issue was taken. It is, of course, the Suez Canal. We are still on the lookout for more photos to feature in our "Where are we now" slot, so, dear Reader, please leaf through your old scrapbooks, albums and slide boxes for any potential shots.



Thanks to David Hammond for this crew list from August 1973. There will be more on the *Karanja* in our next issue. If you have any memories of this fine ship - and her sister - please send them in to "[...calling BI](#)".

FROM THE REQUESTS DEPT....

Some of our newer readers have asked where they can obtain copies of past issues. Young Tracey is always happy to oblige (so rumour has it) and she might just also get around to emailing out the requested copies - when her fingernail varnish is dry. On the other hand, the Biship web site maintains an archive at <http://www.biship.com/callingarchive.htm> which can be freely accessed.



## FROM THE BISHIP LOGBOOK...

It's always a pleasure when BI spouses come to the party, as it were. Your editor was delighted therefore to read the following letter from the logbook on the main Biship website.

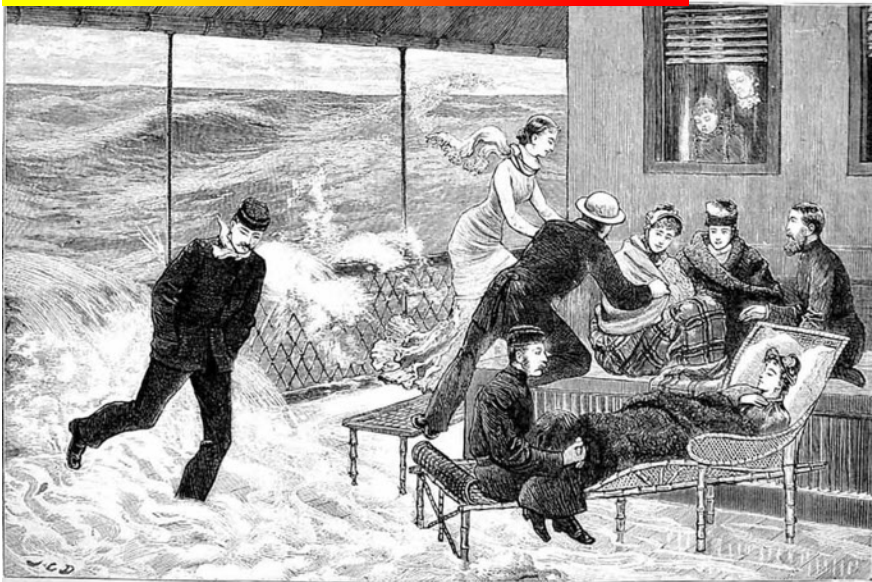
*"Hello, I have joined the BI forum recently since my late husband, Elgin MacBean was with BISN for many years, and sailed on all the S ships. He was last on the Rajula and left when it was scrapped in 1976 - if I remember correctly. BISN and Mackinnons are deep in my sentiments. We sailed to Rangoon in January 1961 on the Sangola, and on our return I first met my husband Elgin on board the Sirdhana*

*while we were returning from Rangoon in March that year. The rest is history! Some years later I worked with Mackinnons Travel Service and was with the company for 13 happy years. I still treasure a few keepsakes of BI, and have lots of pictures - here are a few of my husband on board the Rajula and one of myself outside the Mackinnon Mackenzie building in Kolkata (which was destroyed in a fire and is now just a shell). I would like to get connected with anyone who may have sailed with Elgin.*  
*Rachael MacBean"*

[rachaelmacbean@rediffmail.com](mailto:rachaelmacbean@rediffmail.com)



## FROM THE SCRAPBOOK...



IN THE BAY OF BENGAL  
HOMEWARD BOUND—NOTES ON BOARD A BRITISH INDIA STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY'S STEAMER

*It's good to see the due diligence with which our brother officers attended to our poor distressed female passengers, even in distant times. We trust that all the ladies in this engraving felt better for the experience.*

## FROM THE SEAMEN'S UNION...

Your Editor is indebted to Mike Farlie for bringing his attention to the following heartfelt plea:

*"As a direct consequence of representations made by Nautilus International to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), a global campaign has been launched calling upon governments to recognise their duty to regain control of the Indian Ocean and to bring those responsible for kidnapping and attacking merchant shipping to justice.*

*A coalition of organisations against piracy, with the support of Nautilus, has also launched an e-petition to governments which aims to deliver to the United Nations half a million signatures by World Maritime Day on 23rd September.*

*The e-petition is the centrepiece of a campaign pressing governments to commit enough resources towards ending the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia. It calls on nations to find real solutions to the growing problem of piracy; to take immediate steps to secure the release and safe return of kidnapped seafarers; and to work together to secure a stable future for Somalia.*

*The issue of piracy has gone on for too long and action is needed to fight the ongoing threat that pirate attacks pose to the well being of seafarers, to shipping and the global economy. Pirate attacks continue to increase along the coast of Somalia and have recently spread further south towards Kenya and east towards the Seychelles, putting even more lives at risk and threatening world trade.*

*I am therefore requesting your support for this global campaign so that we can show governments how angry we are. This petition is a great way of demonstrating wider support for government action. I invite you to sign the online petition. This can be done by visiting the following website:-*

[www.endpiracypetition.org](http://www.endpiracypetition.org)

*Please get your family, friends and work colleagues to also sign up. Thank you for your support.*

*Yours faithfully, Mark Dickinson,  
General Secretary*



**FROM THE FREIGHT DEPARTMENT...**

That's not a typographical error for "Freight Department" really, as the following extract from the Company's Handbook perhaps confirms your Editor's worst fears about the operation of the Catering Policy on board. Many thanks to Simon Morgan for this insight into the company's approach to ekeing out the fresh meat supply in 1955. We doubt that even Mike Bowman can find a curry recipe to match these ingredients, but he may just come up with something! Expect more revelations soon!



( 65 )

**RATES OF FREIGHT ON LIVE-STOCK**

	Under 250 Miles	Under 500 Miles	Under 800 Miles	Under 1000 Miles	Under 2000 Miles	Under 3000 Miles
Horses ... ..	Rs. 60	Rs. 90	Rs. 120	Rs. 140	Rs. 200	Rs. 300
Ponies, Mules ... ..	50	70	90	120	140	200
Buffaloes ... ..	50	60	80	100	130	180
Bullocks, Cows ... ..	40	50	70	80	120	140
Monkeys ... ..	10	12	15	20	35	45
Cats, Dogs, Goats, Pigs, Sheep and Rams ... ..	6	8	12	15	25	35
Camels ... ..	90	140	180	240	300	400

**OTHER SPECIAL RATES**

Special rate ... Calcutta to Rangoon	... Sheep or Goats	... Rs.	6 0 0
... Tuticorin to Colombo	... " "	... "	5 1 0
... ..	... ..	... ..	86 8 0

When livestock is shipped without attendants and it is necessary for a member of the ship's crew to provide such attendance, a gratuity will be required to be paid by the shipper for such service. The rate at which the gratuity will be charged to be fixed in consultation with the Commander at the time of shipment.

Horse-boxes, stalls or pens are not provided by the Company and in the case of horses, shippers are recommended to remove the shoes and (if boxes are not sent) to provide coir matting for the animals to stand on, so as to prevent them slipping with the motion of the steamer.

Dogs, Cats, Monkeys, etc. must be placed in charge of the Butcher. They are not allowed in Cabins or Saloons, or on the Bridge Deck. Kennels must be provided by owners.

The information given in this book is intended for the Company's use only, and the Company does not bind itself to maintain any of the services herein detailed, or to carry passengers or cargo, or to provide accommodation by any of its steamers, or at the rates given in this book, unless under a specific engagement made with passengers or shippers.

horse up to ...  
that number. The following numbers of animals  
Attendant :-

2 Buffaloes, 4 Cows or Bullocks, 50 Sheep or Goats.

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## FROM THE REUNION ROUND...



Many thanks to David Mitchell who reports the best turn out in Manchester in June since the northern UK lunchtime get-togethers started in 2004.

Those attending were

John Leigh, Tony Lister, Ken Beadle, Arthur and Mrs Dawson, John Quinn, Mike Feltham, Derek Hargreaves, David Mitchell, Peter and Mrs Fielding, Diane (nee Ashworth) and Bill Blake, James Slater, M S K "Gooney" Goonatilaka, Mike Ousby, Chris Wright, Brian Walker and Robert Vaughn.



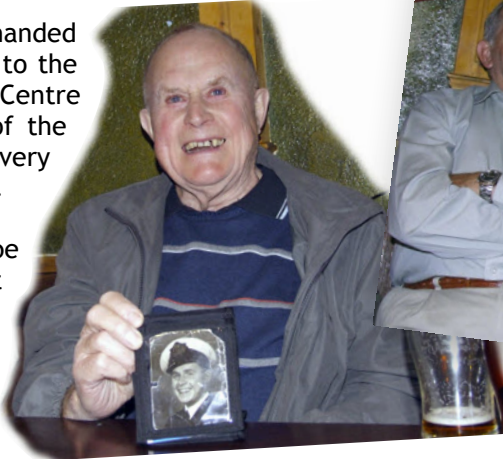
We had a good four hours-plus of food, drink, reminiscences, photos and BI ephemera.

Photos show:

1. Ken Beadle/Chris Wright/Gooney and Peter Fielding.
2. John Quinn/Arthur Dawson and David Mitchell.
3. Peter and Mrs Fielding.
4. Arthur Dawson and himself.
5. Brian Walker/James Slater and Robert Vaughn.

The generous crew handed in a cheque for £37 to the Liverpool Seafarers Centre being the balance of the kitty after a very enjoyable afternoon.

The next event will be **21st June 2011**, at the same venue, Waxy O'Connors, in the Print Works. Put it in your diaries.



That redoubtable band of BI warriors, the BI Engineer Officers Association, will be holding their next reunion on **Thursday 16th September 2010** again in the Buchanan Suite at the Ramada Glasgow City Hotel, Ingram Street, Glasgow. the usual venue.

The cost of luncheon will be £27.00 not including wine. The bar in the Buchanan Suite will be open from noon and we will dine at 1.00 pm prompt. The bar will remain open until at least 4.00 pm. Being a mere Deckie, your Editor is not eligible to attend, but we are sure that an array of photographs will be sent to us to hold in evidence. More details from James Slater via telephone 01706 351190 or email [james.slater@zen.co.uk](mailto:james.slater@zen.co.uk).



The big UK BI reunion will be held in Newcastle from **8th to 10th October**

Some 165 people are currently booked in for the Friday night dinner. Saturday sees a visit to Trinity House and a Tyne River cruise, with the traditional BI Sunday curry lunch to finish off the proceedings.

Full details from [Sue Spence](#), the organiser.

## FROM THE REUNION ROUND (contd)...

In order to address the geographical imbalance of the preceding page, it is gratifying to note that BI socials are not neglected by those in the southern hemisphere either [Ed's note: why do those in the northern half of the globe persist in referring to 'the other place' as "Down Under" when invariably they end up on top in various sporting fixtures - just a thought]. We thank George Preston for this report of the recent Brisbane Bash.

"We had a most enjoyable reunion at the Ghandi Curry House at Southbank in Brisbane on 24th June. "Tastes of India" had unfortunately closed during some renovations of the walkway. However, the alternative venue was great and can be thoroughly recommended to anyone in the Brisbane area with great curries, friendly service and a bit easier to get to than "T of I".

Former BI Blokes attending were, from right to left in the attached photograph, Garry Ruaux, Alan Young, Fred Robb, Tom Gardiner, Philip Paice, Colin Mountford, John Butler and myself.



There was much telling of tall tales, accounts of impossible derring-do's and the like. The lassies, Ruth, Anne, Marilyn, Sue, Jean *et al* had a session around the market on their own for an hour to let the blokes tell a few more tales, or was that vice versa? All agreed that we should hold these functions about every three months and that the location could be anywhere between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast."



Sadly, this tale of good BI enjoyment has a poignant reprise. Just a few weeks after the lunch, Garry Ruaux informed all present that Alan Young had died unexpectedly on 24th July. His wife Sue found him, sitting in his chair facing his favourite view. A very moving Memorial Service and celebration of Alan's life was held at Sue and Alan's property to the north of Eumundi on the Sunshine Coast and was very well attended by his family and former colleagues. After BI, Alan had been a pilot in Cairns in Far North Queensland and later a Brisbane Pilot so there was a distinctly nautical flavour in the gathering with present and former pilots and former BI officers present. Alan was probably unique amongst former BI officers having piloted a US nuclear submarine into the Port of Brisbane and it says a lot about his ability and the high regard in which he was held in the piloting world.

Alan's son, Daniel had flown in from Bangladesh the previous day where he is with Medecins Sans Frontieres and he read Daniel Whitehead Hickey's poem, "Who Pilot Ships". One of Alan's passions was jazz music and his coffin was escorted off his property by a traditional jazz band, playing "Basin Street Blues".

Alan was a contributor to discussions on the Blship web site and we reproduce here one of his recent offerings:

"My own records show I spent almost 14 months in *Chilka* under Chief Officer Downer which must have been worth almost any remission offering. I was one who joined from one of the "lesser known pre-sea training schools", ts Warfleet, then in Botley, UK but originally on the Dart, and founded by Sir Vernon MacAndrew. By my time, it stressed sailing and small boat handling, but sent most of its product to the MN. In 1956, both I and John Carter came from Warfleet to BI. (John stayed with BI for a while after 2/Ms, then went to Trident). We came in with an understanding that we would get a 6 month remission in seatime. In 1959, BoT declined my remission, and I (and I guess, John) had to serve out another 6 months, I as uncert 4/O (John as Senior Cadet) in Nowshera, which was not too hard to take".

Sail straight and true, Alan.



# Matiana jigsaw raffle in aid of Seamens' charities



The staff at "...calling BI" are very pleased to offer this old BI jigsaw puzzle and a related handbook for the 1922 built *Matiana* as a raffle prize to help a seamen's charity.

The going rate for these BI jigsaws, when they turn up, is between £25/£50 unless luck is on your side and the item is missed by a serious bidder in auction ... and they don't turn up very often! Chad Valley made a series of four for the BI, including this one of "*Matiana* and *Dwarka*" by artist James Greig dating from 1933. It has to be said that the box containing the jigsaw is decidedly tatty, but all the pieces are pristine and present.

The raffle will be drawn at the BI reunion in Newcastle at the beginning of October. To ensure the widest possible participation, raffle tickets are available from [callingbi@biship.com](mailto:callingbi@biship.com). Payment can be made by cheque at only £2 each (a mailing address will be given in response to your e-mail requests) or via PayPal at £2.50 each (to cover PayPal transaction costs) to e-mail address [eljay01787-ebay@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:eljay01787-ebay@yahoo.co.uk). You can even pay cash if you happen upon the "...calling BI" editor in Rick's Bar or some other such low dive. You can buy as many tickets as you like! Both items will be raffled separately.

All money raised will be donated to a nautical charity in the name of the ...calling BI newsletter.

