

News of the BISH 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....

Well, this being April, we are well aware that fools rush in, etc, etc, but there again, your editor has never really been regarded as angelic. Surrounded by things *Titanic*, temptation to join the rush into print has reached us. But perhaps with a slightly different twist...

We are also pleased to include in this bumper issue an account of the recent BI reunion in Australia organised by the redoubtable Sandy Yeats and Chris Blake. It all seems to have been really enjoyable and, we are sure, a precursor of more to come. Some photographs of the reunion have already been placed on the Biship messageboard, but we are pleased to include others here. Obviously some of our members are keen to be at the forefront of fashion trends, as you will see.



Wangaratta in the Panama Canal, 1921

Of course, the next big meeting of BI folk will be in Southampton UK on 12th to 14th of October this year. That *doyenne* of reunion organisers, Sue Spence, tells us that currently some 163 people have signed up for the event. If

you would like to join them, contact Sue via this [link](#).

Other temptations contained in this issue include things culinary and a great chance to travel up the river into the Port of Bristol.

We are always on the lookout for temptations (*Tracey - back to the post-room this instant!*) and perhaps we can tempt you into letting us have some of your photographs and stories of things BI. We cannot promise to use them straight away,

but your editor's computer has a little file named 'Potential Copy' that constantly needs filling - please help us!

## FROM THE NAVAL OUTFITTERS....

One of the stranger items listed on eBay recently was this BI jacket. The seller was quite candid in their description, saying that the jacket was "*in very poor condition, there is a large repair to the right-hand pocket. One of the buttons is missing. It is quite dirty overall and the lining is very tatty.*" You can't say fairer than that! According to the inside label, Monnery's of London supplied the jacket to a 'G Pegla' on 8 February 1952. Does anybody recall this gentleman? Your editor certainly hopes that life has treated him better than it seems to have treated his jacket. Unlike some other BI items recently sold on eBay, I'm afraid that this only fetched £4.50. Ah, well, *sic transit gloria...*



## FROM THE FREMANTLE FABLES...

We are indebted to David Mitchell and Jimmy Meldrum for the following account of their time in Fremantle during the recent BI reunion there. David's contribution is in **brown**, whilst Jimmy's is in **blue**. Everybody seems to have had a great time.



Ah, Fremantle, blue sky, wall to wall sun, magnificent architecture, Cappuccino Strip, (even the bus stop is titled thus), plenty local lager type beers to choose from, much the same as our last reunion in 2008. But not quite. An overpriced A\$ is affecting tourism and exports, with a significant and noticeable increase in the cost of living all driven by Western Australia's mineral wealth. Perth is now reckoned to be one of the most expensive cities on earth and WA is considered to have a higher cost of living than places "back east". Empty shops in Fremantle, not seen in 2008 reflect the tourist downturn and people on the streets looking for a \$ hand out were quite a shock to see in this wealthy country.

However, all was not doom and gloom, as the political shenanigans to electing a new leader for the Labour Party providing both visual and written entertainment as the leading characters vied with each other to effect maximum advantage at their opponent's expense. Real Punch and Judy stuff, quite unlike anything in the UK. This fun took your mind away from a pint costing £7.50 compared to £3.60 four years ago.

The Navy Club at 64 High Street granted temporary membership for those spending a couple of weeks in port and this came in handy during the heat of the afternoon for a refreshing and more reasonably priced beer.

A decision had been made before we came out to stay in Fremantle not to go walk about, so the fortnight either side of The BI Weekend was spent in local travel by train, bus and river to Bunbury (passing the steam Hotham Valley Railway), Perth and round about. Generally, life was unrushed with slow starts each day wandering out to a pavement café for a late breakfast then taking things as they came on our "slow" days. Visits to the Flying Angel and Stella Maris missions looking for BI memories only turned up a 1954 colour print of *Nuddea* by Leonard B Moffatt.

The reunion was organised jointly by Chris Blake and Sandy Yeats. I had sailed with Sandy in 1963 when I was 4th Engineer Officer on the *Kenya* and Sandy was a Deck Cadet. I had never consciously heard of Chris, but that was not unusual as the BI was a big company and had many ships.

I arrived at the hotel and acknowledged Sandy Yeats with a wave before checking in. I did little more than drop my bags in my room and organise a back-pack before returning to the lobby to catch-up with whosoever was there. At about 14:40 hrs a 'Missions to Seafarers' mini-bus arrived and ten of us climbed aboard. We headed towards the suburb of Bibra Lakes where we had organised ourselves a visit to the 'Farstad Offshore Simulator'. This simulator had been built and paid for by the Farstad Shipping Co. and had only been opened since very late in 2011. This Norwegian company operated oil rigs and supply vessels. The simulator was one of only three in the world and is the largest and most advanced marine simulator in the world. After being formally greeted, we were ushered around a few corridors, climbed a few steps and found ourselves within the simulator sphere some ten metres in diameter with 360 degrees of (simulated) vision. Twenty-seven individual cameras had recorded the ocean's horizon. In front of us (on the screen) was an oil rig. We were on the bridge of the supply vessel looking down onto our working deck. The Simulator operator was manipulating some controls and inching us ever closer to the rig. I watched in absolute awe as he manoeuvred us to a position where we could do some anchor handling. Our legs were becoming used to the slow roll, but when it suddenly bucketed down with rain and the sky darkened, I experienced sensations of being back at sea. I suppose that's what this place was all about!



We left the simulator and went a few paces along the corridor to where there were large television screens, positioned vertically, depicting the vista as seen from the working deck of our supply vessel. All the screens, all the instructions, all the feedback was fully integrated such that all of the different professions could, hopefully, relate to what was going on. At this point in time we were all 'deckhands' and were responsible for securing / lashing anchor chains / cables /etc. that were placed before us. Yet again, at another room with another very large television screen, we were upon the oil rig itself and could work the large crane.

I found the whole experience absolutely invigorating and was extremely pleased that we had been allowed to pay this visit and had been made very welcome.

It was around 16:00 hrs and our mini-bus was awaiting us. Conversation on the bus revolved around the stranding of the Italian cruise ship *Costa Concordia*. All present (all ex-Deck Officers except for me) were of the opinion that the televised remarks from the Head of the company immediately condemning the Captain were totally unwarranted. As our own BI captains were not averse to giving the passengers a 'close-up, look-see,' of points of interest on occasions in times past, the feeling seemed to be one of 'That could have been me!'

The Esplanade Hotel yet again hosted the reunion's dinner on the Friday evening of 2 March, attended by forty, a significantly reduced number from 2008, with five from the UK. Back at the hotel we had time to prepare ourselves for the evening's meal beginning at 19:00 hrs. with four circular tables each seating eight people all nicely laid out. I found myself seated between Karen Plant and Roger Linbird. Karen's husband - Mike - is currently a Great Barrier Reef Pilot. They live on Queensland's Gold Coast. Roger, on the other hand, was a 'Marconi Sahib', not a BI Officer but had sailed on enough BI ships to feel good enough to join us in this reunion. He currently lives in Bali.





## FROM THE FREMANTLE FABLES (contd)...



After an easy Saturday morning we caught the train to Perth and embarked at Barrack Street Jetty for our four-hour trip up the Swan River to indulge in wine tasting at the Water's Edge Estate winery. It was said prior to leaving many on these cruises came back much the worse for wear having taken advantage of free wine on the way up, tasting of the wines on offer, then consuming their purchases on the way back. I can record this was not the case with our illustrious company, but a hen party certainly made the best of their day. Along the Swan banks could be seen Australian Pelican, Ibis, Cormorant and Heron. We used this morning to catch-up on each other's news and then to drive with my wife, Margo, the 40 km. into Perth to catch the cruise boat heading for a winery. Margo was pleased to recognise and chat with some other BI wives before we sailed at 13:15 hrs. The mv 'Lady Devine' was a spacious, twin screw, single-decked cruise boat. This was not an exclusive cruise for us BI folk and we had a group of young ladies bent on having a good time at a hen party for a lady with a sign indicating Bride-to-be on a veil.

I sat with Mike and Karen, recalling all the familiar names

and places that BI ships sailed to. Also at my table was David Mitchell.

By arrangement both David and I were wearing our 'BI rig' which consisted of a pair of long black socks with two white bands around the top. We also wore the polo shirt emblazoned with BI's insignia that we had both

purchased in Fremantle's market back in 2008. I also wore my BI cap sporting the cap-badge. I had a feeling that I would never get lost!

It was all very pleasant, cruising up the Swan River and was made even more so when a complimentary bottle of white wine was placed on our table. A little while later lunch was served. We were called-up one table at a time, but I fear that the caterers did not completely grasp for whom they were preparing food. Most of us are 'Curry Nuts' and would wolf it down at the drop of a hat. The way they had set out the food display bade us collect our plates and to pass by the salad / cold meat selection prior to arriving at the curry and rice dishes. Luckily I still had some room on my plate for a decent-sized helping of the curried meat. I actually returned for 'seconds' when I had finished! The complimentary wine was still flowing and the noise level was increasing in direct proportion to the wine consumed.

About an hour and a half later, we pulled into the jetty that belonged to the 'Water's Edge Estate'. It was their wines that had been offered to us on the trip up to here. The Cellars were situated about 200 metres up a gentle slope. By now, the 'Hen Party' was in full swing

and the more adventurous of them cuddled us whilst their photos were taken. Goodness only knows what stories they would have concocted when they arrived home!

Sunday was the highlight with a sail from Fremantle aboard the 55m, three masted barquentine rigged sail training ship *Leeuwin II*. Leaving at 0930, returning at 1600 with a curry lunch on board, everyone had an opportunity to take the wheel and under the watchful eye of Captain Chris Blake, OBE, guide the ship along the coast in fine sailing weather, albeit with light winds we made no more than about 4 knots at best.

The sight of one Engineer on the wheel being coached by another Engineer brought forth some interesting comments! I walked to 'B Shed', Victoria Quay, where I was to join the Sail Training Ship 'Leeuwin 11' meeting up with Roger Linbird and Ken and Celia Milne. At 10:00 hrs we boarded, using our two 'Volvo' engines, we motored past the maritime museum and out into the Indian Ocean. Our Skipper was Chris Blake (ex - BI and one of the organisers of our reunion). The 'Leeuwin 11' has five permanent crew members - Skipper, Mate, Second Mate / Bosun, Engineer and Chef. Everyone else was a volunteer. The Skipper wore a uniform shirt and epaulettes, as did the (female) Mate and Second Mate / Bosun. The Engineer wore long black-coloured trousers, a black-coloured cummerbund and a green/yellow sort of camouflage shirt. All this was topped-off by him wearing a wide-brimmed hat that was reminiscent of a Spanish Flamenco dancer! Hmmm! The Chef mainly stayed below decks and was dressed in black.

I counted a couple of men, but overwhelmingly the rest of the crew looked to be 19 year-old young ladies. They wore red-coloured polo shirts with 'Leeuwin 11 Crew' marked on their backs, very short shorts and sensible shoes. I was quite surprised to watch these young ladies in action as they climbed the rigging, hauled the ropes as ordered and carried on as though they had been doing this for a while. Why would they risk ending up with calloused hands and scarred legs just to crew this sailing ship?

At every opportunity I would closely examine their legs in an effort to identify if my hypothesis was correct. It wasn't! But I felt that I just had to do my bit for 'Occupational Health and Safety'.



Jimmy Meldrum and David Mitchell





## FROM THE FREMANTLE FABLES (contd)...



Sadly, there was no breeze to speak of. Nevertheless we hoisted nearly all the sails and stopped one engine. We headed north up towards Cottesloe Beach and then turned around back towards the harbour. We did this a couple of times and those of us who wanted were allowed to steer this tall ship. The Skipper would call out a compass course to follow and if necessary would order that the rudder be swung 10, 20 or even 30 degrees. The 'Leeuwin 11' is a Barquentine. This translates as her having three masts - fore, main and mizzen - The fore-mast was fitted with 'square sails,' meaning that the sails were at right-angles to the length of the ship. The main and mizzen masts have fore and aft sails, meaning a 'Schooner' rig. As the fore mast is well ahead of the imaginary 'pivot-point' of the ship and seemed to be doing all the work, the wind would try and push our bows down-wind. To counter this effect it was necessary to turn the rudder an appropriate number of degrees the other way. I found that she would not keep her desired heading for more than a few seconds before I was correcting my course. I loved it all!

The PA system crackled into life. "Anyone interested in climbing up the ratlines to the level of the first yardarm should now come forward and see the Second Mate". Tim Ridge (Deck) and Bill Ross (Engine) both did and they were soon trussed-up in their safety harnesses. Before they were allowed to progress any further they were asked to suspend their bodies from the ratlines by just using their hands. This position was to be maintained for 15 seconds. Neither of them had any trouble doing this. I'm unsure as to exactly what else they were asked, but soon they went aloft, caught their breath whilst enjoying the view and then came slowly down. Good for them!

Another message over the PA advised that 'below deck - ship tours' were now commencing. Just a handful of us followed our leader and were shown the Communications Room, a glimpse of the Engine Room, the Galley, the sleeping quarters,

toilets and finally the gift shop. I bought an 'A2'- sized glossy print of the 'Leeuwin 11' under full sail and immediately wondered how I could return it safely to home without making it

creased. What I needed was a cardboard tube as is sold at a Post Office. I resolved to purchase one ASAP.

Lunch-time came and we went to the dining saloon to partake of another curry and rice dish. It was all very enjoyable! We had been advised that the vessel was not licensed to sell alcohol and that we should bring our own supplies aboard if required. I didn't bother!

For reasons unknown to me it was decided to fire a cannon from the poop deck. Two young ladies carefully lifted the heavy-looking swivel gun onto its mounting on the stern quarter and, with the Engineer's assistance, opened the ammunition box and removed what looked to be a 12 gauge shotgun charge. With extreme difficulty the Engineer attempted to secure the breech into the cannon and then tried to discharge it. Nothing happened at first, but

he eventually made it go 'bang' and honour was satisfied.

Entering Fremantle Harbour we had Roger Doman on the steering wheel. All

the 'square sails' had been reefed and the mainsail hauled down. This left the mizzen mast sail as the only one operating and was left in position as an aid to swinging the ship the 180 degrees necessary to present our port side to the wharf. All went well and that was the end of a good cruise! In the evening everybody felt that all in all it had been a very good day!

I am a member of the World Ship Society and found the Fremantle branch met in the offices of the Leeuwin Ocean Foundation in B-shed, so off I went to see what

was what. After making myself known and why I was there, I ended up giving a talk off the top of my head about the BI, lasting some forty minutes.

Arising from this came an invitation to their annual BBQ on the Swan River bank near Leeuwin Barracks the following Saturday. A fine end to an enjoyable stay before our return home via Singapore, a place now unrecognisable from my days on *Rajula* in 1969.

Thanks to Sandy Yates and Chris Blake for making everything possible and keeping the BI sailing.



Roger 'Slim' Doman



Chris Blake



Sandy Yates showing Maria the ropes...or something



## FROM THE DIPLOMATIC BAG...



It is unusual to say the least that your editor steps into the rarefied world of diplomacy. He is not normally noted for his tact and sensitivity. But even he can recognise a sledgehammer when he sees one. For his contribution to the *Titanic* "celebration", we offer this exchange of diplomatic telegrams between the British Embassy and Consulate in Washington & New York and the Foreign Office in England:

From the British Embassy Washington dated April 19, 1912 to Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, *et seq.*

"Although many hysterical utterances in the press have appeared, it may be said that on the whole that the general tendency amongst the better class of newspapers is to await details from the survivors before forming any judgement as the causes of the disaster and the incidence of responsibility.

The opinion however is widely expressed that the vessel was being pressed at unnecessary speed and with a disregard of possible dangers and in this accusation there is increasing tendency to include the authorities of the White Star Line as well as the Captain of the ill-fated vessel. However unjust these insinuations may be in view of the paucity of details regarding what actually occurred, they are beginning to find general circulation and of course the press tries to fan the spark into a flame.

The so-called Hearst papers - the *New York American*, the *New York Journal*, *Boston American*, etc are the worst offenders. However much may have been written about the School of journalism it is difficult for any person not residing in this country to realise to what extent their influence over the less well educated classes is pernicious and is heartless exploitation of every calamity that is ever certain and of every scandal that has ever attracted comment in this country.

That criticisms of hostile comment should have been directed against the border trade also was only to be expected, but the spirit actuating such criticism cannot truthfully be said to be more severe or embittered than that would have been directed against any department of the United States government whose regulations might have appeared to be inadequate in a similar occurrence to an American vessel.

Members of Congress have naturally been awakened into unwanted activity by the magnitude of this calamity and many of them rushed forward to put themselves in evidence by introducing bills and resolutions both in the Senate and House of Representatives....

....an investigation...will undoubtedly be immediately taken in accordance with a resolution introduced into the Senate by Senator Smith of Michigan, a person always anxious to put himself forward where any passing notoriety can be achieved....

...that the hungry herds of these callous press reporters will have full opportunity of increasing the horror of the tragedy to the survivors when once on shore will it is feared be difficult if not impossible to prevent..."

In a further telegram dated April 22, 1912, poor Senator Smith was further described by the Embassy as "a person whose singular incompetence for the duty devolved on him was soon shown by the questions he asked." And the press were further excoriated - "considering the whole position in the excited condition of public opinion here, always liable to run into excess and now worked up into passion by reckless and vulgar press throwing wild charges about, the White Star authorities took the right course when they volunteered to give all the information in their power." The ambassador goes on "it might be more courteous if some communication had been addressed in this Embassy, though from persons so ignorant of the usages of international relations as most members of the Senate, no such action need have been expected".

Your editor concedes that the British ambassador may have a point as far as the *New York American* newspaper is concerned, if this illustration showing a head-on collision with the iceberg is anything to go by!





## FROM TIMES PAST...

We are indebted to the newsletter of marine novelist *par excellence* Julian Stockwin (<<http://www.julianstockwin.com/>>) for this little nugget of gold.



### CAPTAIN GROSE'S PROSE PROJECT

The Georgian age was a time when language was more earthy and colourful than today, slang words often deriving from references to bodily functions.

Among the volumes in anyone's reference library should be "A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue" by a Captain Francis Grose. This and Grose's "A Provincial Glossary" were, when they were published in the late 1780s, the largest assemblage of contemporary "non-standard" words.

Grose was born in 1731. He was an eminent English antiquarian who lived life to the full in every way. Contemporary portraits of him show a very large man. It is reported that he was so rotund that his servant had to truss him up in bed in order to keep the bed clothes around his vast stomach!

Despite his size, Grose was very active in his fieldwork to record the slang of the day; he wandered the streets picking up speech from all walks of life and frequented drinking dens, carefully listening and noting everything down.

Grose's rank was not naval; he served in the Surrey militia for a time. He travelled extensively throughout the British Isles and featured in several of Robert Burns' poems. He died in Dublin of an apoplectic fit in 1791.

The Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue was first published in 1785, and went on to be reprinted in several other editions, the latest being 1811.

You can download the 1811 edition free as an ebook:

<[http://www.amazon.co.uk/1811-Dictionary-Vulgar-Tongue-ebook/dp/B000JQUCH6/ref=sr\\_1\\_1\\_title\\_0\\_main?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1329130924&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.co.uk/1811-Dictionary-Vulgar-Tongue-ebook/dp/B000JQUCH6/ref=sr_1_1_title_0_main?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1329130924&sr=1-1)> or read it at Project Gutenberg: <[http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk\\_files=1981272](http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=1981272)>

Here are a few entries to whet your appetite!

Potatoe (*sic*) Trap - The mouth. "*Shut your potatoe trap and give your tongue a holiday*" i.e. be silent.

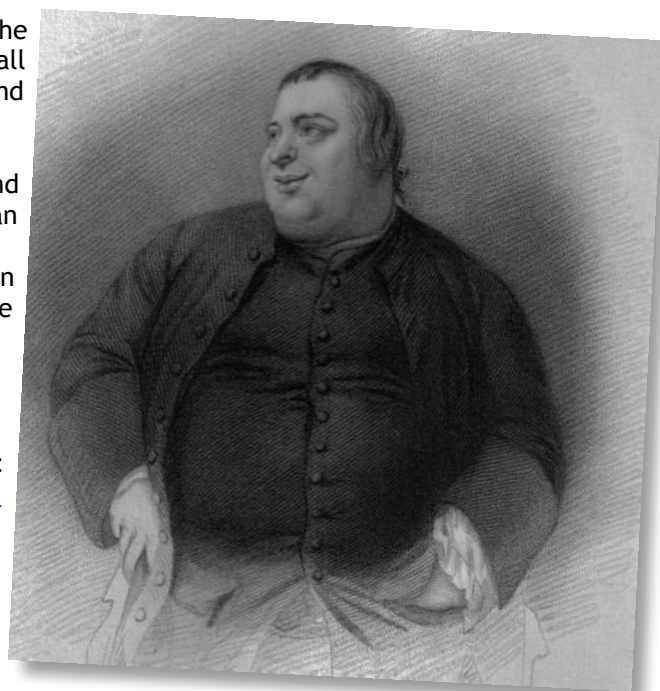
Gollumpus - A large, clumsy fellow.

Apple dumplin shop - A woman's bosom.

Soss brangle - A slatternly wench.

Lumping - Great. A lumping pennyworth; a great quantity for the money; frequently said of a man who marries a fat woman.

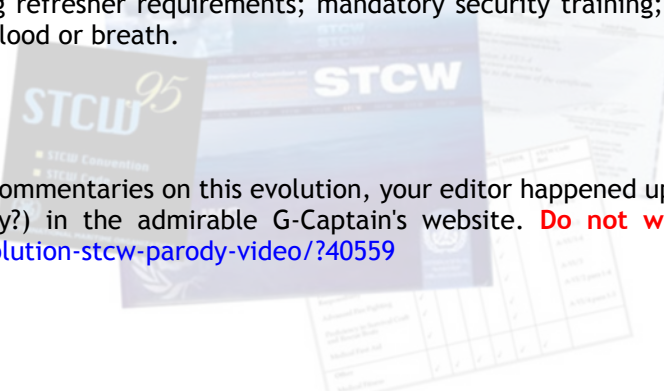
A wonderful volume to dip into! Be warned, though, in parts it is wonderfully un-PC!



## FROM THE CORRIDORS OF POWER...

Those of you with a nervous disposition are advised to look away now. There can't be many of our readers who are ignorant of the IMO's Standards of Training Certification and Watch Keeping, whether or not they have left the sea for some time. The latest "improvements" to the original Convention came into force on the beginning of this year and are known as the Manila Amendments. Among the significant changes are new mandatory rest hours for seafarers; new grades of certificates of competence for able seamen in both deck and engineering departments; new and updated training including refresher requirements; mandatory security training; additional medical standards and specific alcohol limits in blood or breath.

Whilst looking at various commentaries on this evolution, your editor happened upon the highlighted video (which is in execrable taste, surely?) in the admirable G-Captain's website. **Do not watch it.** You have been warned! <http://gcaptain.com/evolution-stcw-parody-video/?40559>



## FROM THE 'ABANDON SHIP' DEPT...

And now definitely for the last word on things *Titanic*, your editor couldn't but admire the panache with which ship evacuations were done in South America before the turn of the 20th century. He came across this photograph from the marvellous Mariners-L website <http://www.mariners-l.co.uk>.



## FROM THE MESS-ROOM...

Well, we didn't think we could stump our curry Guru, Mike Bowman in Darwin, but I think we may have. In response to our request in our last issue for the origins of Nepal Curry, Mike wrote in to say that his rapidly fading crib sheet from the Bombay cookery school recorded that Nepal Curry had as its main ingredients beef, pumpkin, fresh red and green chillies and almond chips, but he couldn't find the recipes from his veritable library of 190 books on curry. However, to the rescue came Peter Glass, who wrote in: "One of the great plus points in our lives was the years my wife, Davina, spent in Bombay whilst I was chugging around the Persian Gulf( we still called it that in those days). Amongst other things she spent a lot of time finding out about the art of curry making and it has proved invaluable to this day. Here, in rural France, we hold regular curry lunch parties at our home and they are extremely popular with the expat community. We serve a variety of curries and one of them is Nepal Chicken Curry. It sounds very romantic, although quite frankly I do not think that it is so very different from all the other chicken curries from the sub-continent. Who am I to be a kill-joy and herewith the recipe that we use. The 'we' means that Davina does all the skilled work and I am the chief chopper up-er.

### KUKHURAKO TARKARI - Nepalese Chicken Curry

#### Ingredients

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 x 1kg chicken, skinned and jointed  | 2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander |
| 3 tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil   | 3 fl.oz (85ml) single cream           |
| 1 tablespoon garlic puree   | sea salt to taste                     |
| 1 tablespoon ginger puree   | 1.5 pints(900ml) of chicken stock     |
| 4 oz(110 gm.) chopped onions  |                                       |
| Spices: 6 cloves; 2 teaspoons cumin seeds; 2 inch piece of cassia bark; 4 bay leaves; 1 teaspoon paprika; |                                       |
| 1 - 6 fresh red chillies, chopped   |                                       |

#### Method

1. Heat the ghee in a wok and fry the spices for 30 seconds. Add the garlic and stir fry for a further minute. Add the onion and stir fry for at least 5 more minutes
2. Add the stock and when simmering, add the chicken pieces, simmer for around 15 - 20 minutes
4. Add the further ingredients and cook for a further ten minutes or so.

It is recommended that the curry is served for Sunday lunch after a few stiff gin and tonics and washed down with copious drafts of French dry white wine.

*Bonne Appetit!* Peter & Davina Glass".

Whether it is Mike or Peter who is correct about the ingredients doesn't really seem to matter. Your editor can smell the delicious cooking from here. Purists may argue that only a can of "All-slops" should go with the curry, but I'm with Peter. I'm sure that our original enquirer, Richard Henderson, will enjoy this recipe. Meanwhile, your editor is scouring the road maps of France to try and locate this culinary haven.





## FROM THE COMPETITIONS DEPARTMENT...

Well done to those of you (mostly from Australia) who correctly identified that we were in Brisbane's Queensland Maritime Museum for this photograph. But a special thanks to Chris Shelbourn, who provided clues for us to dig out the reason why the tug, *Forceful*, sports a BI funnel. Chris looked round the ship whilst visiting his brother and sent us a very long document on the history of the Brisbane River, which identified the previous owners of the tug as the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company. An ancestor of that company, the Queensland Steam Shipping Company, was in fact set up by a conglomeration of local P & O agents and British India in 1881. It was founded to compete for the state's mail contract in competition with the Australasian Steam Navigation Company. They eventually amalgamated in 1887 under the AUSN name. Apparently that company went out of existence in the 1960s. The founders agreed that the Queensland Shipping Company would adopt the BI funnel colours, whilst the house flag was a white saltire cross on a red background. In fact, almost a reversal of the BI house flag, given that it was a full flag and not a burgee.

Built at Glasgow in 1925 for the predecessor of Queensland Tug Co. *Forceful* arrived in 1926 for river towage and ocean salvage. Her working crew of six included the captain. On a good day she was capable of 13 knots from her triple-expansion reciprocating engine, while gobbling about 10 tons from the Coal Wharves at South Brisbane. In February 1929, the liner *Arafura* was disabled in cyclonic conditions after leaving Townsville. *Forceful*'s larger sister, *Coringa*, went to the rescue until her steering gear broke down in heavy seas and she had to withdraw. *Forceful* stepped into the breach and after a 300km dead tow, brought the stricken steamship into the Brisbane River.



## FROM THE BIG YACHT WORLD...

Readers may recall that last year your editor spent a few pleasant hours in the company of Andrew Fisher on-board his yacht, *Somerset Trader*, in Bristol. Andrew has written into "... Calling BI" to say that he will be again at the Bristol Harbour Festival on the 20th to 22nd of July 2012, offering a super chance for a BI get-together for those in the south-west of UK. He welcomes all BI staff and friends to join him. He writes: "There would also be possibilities

for a few BI people to be on board for the trip from Portishead to Bristol on the River Avon passing under Clifton Suspension Bridge and locking in through the Cumberland basin on the 18th or 19th July, and/or returning to Portishead on 23rd July. It is too early to confirm dates or times for these vessel movements, as it will all depend on tides and locking schedules for the different size vessels. They also have to swing the big Cumberland Basin bridge for us to get in, so we would probably be grouped with vessels with a large air draft. In any case it is not too early to pencil this weekend in your diary". Andrew can be contacted at [amfisher@aol.com](mailto:amfisher@aol.com). Sounds like a good trip to be had!





## FROM THE "BI NEWS" DEPT...



Having published the cover of the very first edition of BI News in our previous issue, it seemed to us to be only right and proper to reprint the cover of the last edition of all. We were so pleased when the editor of that journal, David Precious, contacted us and said: "The comments about "BI News" brought back many happy memories to me. I was fortunate enough to be working in the

Personnel Department when I was first asked to be the London Correspondent initially under, I think, Captain Leslie (L W) Smith and then Commodore Gun-Cunningham. Gun was quite a character and I was surprised how well

I got on with him.

When Gun retired I took over the Editor's role on my own. I much enjoyed being Editor as it gave me a wider role beyond my Personnel duties. I recall the highlights were:

- being part of the BI welcoming party in Falmouth in April 1969 when Robin Knox-Johnston in *Suhaili* completed the first solo circumnavigation of the globe.
- We met up with him in the former BI tug *Arusha* off the Lizard and accompanied him into port
- initiating a regular series of articles "Around the Fleet" - the support and co-operation of sea staff in writing these articles and sending photos was excellent
- attending the Pensioners' Luncheons as always was a pleasurable occasion and a day out of the office for me!
- choosing colour transparencies (do you remember these?!) for the front cover - we were spoiled for choice. A BI ship was usually chosen but with occasional changes such as *Chindwara* Cadets with a mock up of Apollo 11 - see issue No. 64. Here is an idea - try and identify the Cadets in the picture? (Editor's note: we will print this in a future edition)

I was particularly pleased, and saddened, by the final front cover in September 1971 - sunset on the BI fleet and on the BI Company. Happy Days! David".

And here is that last front cover, featuring the company ships *Cape of Good Hope*, *Tairea*, *Uganda* and *Manora*.

The sun indeed setting on a remarkable institution.



## FROM THE POST ROOM...

If anybody knows of Robert Galloway in Australia or has a good e-mail address for him, we would like him to know that we keep on getting our e-mails bounced back to us. We are having similar problems with David Davies in UK and Bob Hannah. Can anybody help?

