



# BOLLARD---PULL---

*United Towing & Salvage Society's Bi-annual Magazine*



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## Front Cover :

### ***“Euroman”* towing *“Horta Barbosa”* stern first due to severe bow damage after a collision.**

Photo. Kevin Gay.

This was a classic case of the ‘dance of death’. Two ships on complementary courses, displaced to starboard. One ship opts for port to port, the other ship decides to pass starboard to starboard. On the night of December 19, 1972, the *Sea Star* and the *Horta Barbosa* were proceeding on nearly complementary courses in the Gulf of Oman. The visibility was excellent with a light NE wind. The *Sea Star* was loaded on a course of 142 at about 16 knots. The *Horta Barbossa* was in ballast on a course of 322 also at about 16 knots.

The *Sea Star* detected the *Barbosa* at 14 miles and altered slightly to stbd to 145. The *Barbosa* detected the *Sea Star* at 16 miles, determined that she would easily pass stbd to stbd. Indeed their courses were sufficiently displaced so that, if both had maintained course and speed, they would have passed starboard to starboard with a CPA (Closest Point of Approach) of about one mile. The *Sea Star* apparently regarded this separation as insufficient and, at a range of about four miles, went starboard to effect a port to port passing. The *Horta Barbosa* maintained course and struck the *Sea Star* almost at right angles just forward of the bridge. She exploded and sank, killing 11 of her crew. After the collision both vessels caught fire and were abandoned by their crews. Recovery of *Sea Star* was attempted before the fires on board were extinguished, but following several explosions the vessel sank spilling some 115,000 tons of crude oil into the Gull of Oman.

For some 6 minutes the bridge of the *Horta Barbosa* was unmanned while the lookout and the cadet called their reliefs. The Officer of the watch was in the chartroom, he said the *Sea Star* was 3 to 4 miles away 30 degrees on his bow when he went to plot the position. The Lookout returned to the bridge to see the *Sea Star* on a crossing course and called the watch officer. The engines were rung full astern but the collision took place almost at once followed by a large explosion.

## CONTENTS

Rough Seas - Albert Smith's memories of World War 2 .....	4-8	
Goodbye " <i>LadyThelma</i> " .....	9	
New Look for " <i>Serviceman</i> " 1961 .....	10-11	
North Sea Collision 1960 .....	12-13	
Rescue Tug " <i>Englishman</i> " ..... Ian Dodd .....	14-15	
A Month in the Life of a Tugman (continued) ..... Pete Elsom .....	16-17	
" <i>Guardsman</i> " Mined 1940 .....	18	
Trouble at Paull ..... Letter .....	Jim Uney .....	19
My Time and Memories with U.T.Co. ....	Fred Goodfellow .....	20-24
Falmouth 1966 .....	Dave Proud .....	25
Personality Portrait ..... Dan Betts (senior) .....	Yorkshire Times .....	26
Falklands Accolade .....	Hull Daily Mail 1984 .....	27
" <i>Welshman</i> " Heels in Dock. 1961 .....	Hull Daily Mail .....	28-31

## **Rough Seas**

(Albert Smith's Memories of World War II)

by Barrie Fraser

Albert Smith grew up in Kingston Upon Hull, England, and now lives in East Lake Ainslie, Canada with his wife, Verna. During World War II he served in the British Merchant Navy.

Following are some of his memories.

Kingston Upon Hull, with a population of about 280,000, is a city on the east coast of England on the North Sea. The city's name is usually shortened to just Hull. In the mid-1800's the city became a thriving port for the trawling fish industry and its offshoot trades such as fish fertilizer and oil, and the production of ice.

There were seven children in the Smith family, three boys and four girls. One other brother died when he was two. The family lived in a terrace house on Wassand Street. The houses were attached, and steps from each led down to a terrace paved with flagstone. "You could play all your games on those terraces," Albert recalls, "The area was crowded with people. Each family had up to five children."

And the neighbourhood was rough. When one boy from a nearby street called Wickan was brought before a judge, on a charge of assault, the judge remarked, "They should take the 'n' off 'Wickan and put 'd' on instead."

Albert's father worked for the Hull Ice Company which was owned by the fish trawling companies, the ice being used for packing fish. Albert himself went to work at the fish market when only fourteen. His job was to push a barrow of fish and ice kits weighing 10 stone for three quarter miles. "I was just a skinny kid. Sometimes my knees would be wobbling," Albert says. One day the wheel of Albert's barrow hit a ridge on the cobblestone street and tipped over. "I hit my chin, and my nose was bleeding", he says, " I was sitting there in tears. Some men came to help me reload the barrow."

When he was sixteen Albert joined the Hull Fire Station (Auxiliary Fire Service). More firemen were needed because of the imminent danger of German incendiary bombs. "I went through the full rigour of being a fireman," Albert says, "We'd jump from a four story building into a net, crawl in a smoke filled room with a wet rag over our face, and have to find a dummy."

After serving in the fire department for a few months Albert signed on with the Merchant Navy on the ship *King Frederick*. "I went down to the shipping office," he says, "and saw a man named Bill Hales, the Union Representative, and asked him for a ship. He said I was too small and not ready for that job. I said 'There's many a big spud with a bad center.'" The Chief Steward, Mr. Cooper was present, and liked Albert's spunk. "I'll have that boy!" he said. "Mr. Hale, himself," Albert adds, "lost three lads in the war. There is a plaque remembering them just inside the British Legion in Hedon."

After joining the Merchant Navy, Albert had to pass his gunnery ticket. Training to be a gunner was done in a large dome with simulated planes flying overhead. In this realistic environment trainees would sit and shoot at targets. There was also training for firing at submarines. A British Sergeant Marine Gunner was in charge of gunnery training. "This particular time we were down for practice," Albert recalls, " and the gun didn't fire, so the rule was that if the gun misfired, you were to recock, and try again. You were allowed to do it three times. If the gun still didn't fire you were

to stand clear of the gunnery platform. After our third attempt the Sergeant Gunner said, 'I know what this is', and he bent over and picked something up from the floor. When he did, the recall went off and the gun exploded in his face. The impact threw him down onto another gunnery platform. We had to pick him up and take him to the Chief Steward." Albert had his left eye against the sight setter of the gun when it exploded, causing an injury that he still feels the effect of. "After that, I wasn't too fussy about guns," Albert says.

Albert signed on with the *King Frederick* as a catering boy and gunner. Some of his duties included serving officers, and cleaning their rooms. He mentions the challenge of trying to scrub floors on hands and knees while the ship rolled on rough seas. He also worked as a galley boy, helping the Chief Cook prepare meals. The catering and galley boys slept on straw mattresses they had to buy themselves. If they were late getting up in the morning the cook would come in and splash ice water on them, soaking the straw. With England now at war there was the ever present danger of Albert's ship being attacked by German submarines and aircraft. "On the *King Frederick*," Albert says, "we did two trips, one trip to Baltimore for grain and the other to Cuba for sugar. On the next trip we got attacked off Weymouth, in the English Channel, by German planes. This was July, 1940, around the time of Dunkirk. There were 25 ships in our convoy, a few tankers and the rest cargo boats."

The Germans had come in full force, with many planes. "There were stacks of them," Albert remembers, "They were dive bombing the ships, and shooting through the ship's alleyways. I was in the galley with the cook. There was a kettle of hot oil for frying fish on the stove. The oil was flying about. The Chief Cook yelled to me, 'Get out!' The only person injured was the cabin boy who was shot in the leg. He was yelling and screaming and going berserk. I asked the Chief Steward what I should do. He said, 'Hit him!' So I hit him and he calmed down. This was so the Chief Steward could attend to him."

One thing that saved the *King Frederick* from being sunk was the actions of the Second Engineer who opened all the steam valves in the lower part of the ship. This sent steam pouring out the stacks, making the Germans think that the ship had had a direct hit. So they eased off. But the *King Frederick's* back was broken from the attack and was immobilized. A local trawler came alongside and picked up Albert and his crewmates.

"I signed on with another ship, the *Hopecrest*," Albert says, "a cargo ship that went to Australia for sugar. We came home through the Panama Canal, then up along the American coast, along the Canadian coast, past Sydney, Nova Scotia, and past Labrador. Between the Strait of Belle Isle and Greenland we hit a snowstorm. The waves smashed everything up, and took all the life boats away." The damaged *Hopecrest* made its way down to Greenock, Scotland where its cargo was unloaded.

Albert remembers sailing to Spain and Morocco for iron ore. Spain was neutral during the war but remained friendly with the Axis powers. "In Spain," Albert says, "you'd go into a café. There would be a big picture of Hitler on one wall, and one of Franco on the other wall. It was obvious they were friends."

From the *Hopecrest* Albert went on the ship *SS Ocean Freedom*. Disaster befell this ship, as well. "We were sunk just inside O Kil'din on the Barents Sea by aircraft," Albert says, "We were taking supplies, tanks, ammunition, to Russia. We were just entering the harbour at Murmansk. There was no loss of life. They came out in boats from shore to rescue us." The crew of the *SS Ocean Freedom* was in Russia for four months. "We had over 100 air raids in less than a fortnight," Albert says,

“Daytime or night, they were at it all the time. They had only to fly over Finland to come right into Murmansk. When they came down diving you could actually see the pilots in their seats, they were that low.” For safety Albert’s crew was removed down the coast to Archangel. “I sailed to Russia again in a convoy on the *Fort Kullyspell*. It was a brand new ship” Albert says, “and was the Commodore Ship of the Convoy. We were carrying tanks and high explosives. We left port at Loch Leven. As we set off we heard that we had Rear Admiral Boucher, the Admiral of the Convoy, aboard. He met with us in the smoke room, and said, ‘Don’t worry, we’re going to get the German battleship, the *Scharnhorst*, out of the fjords. We are going to use your ships as a decoy convoy. We have behind the battleships, *HMS Belfast*, *HMS Duke of York*, and *HMS Norfolk*, and other destroyers. They can be with us in a few hours.’”

It is said that ‘*Lucky Scharnhorst*’, as the ship was known in Germany, was a focus of national pride. Hitler had been persuaded to send the ship to arctic Norway to harass Russian bound convoys. On Christmas Day 1943 German Admiral Doenitz signalled *Scharnhorst*, “The enemy is attempting to aggravate the difficulties of our eastern land forces in their heroic struggle by sending an important convoy of provisions and arms to the Russians. We must help.” This was the convoy that Albert’s ship the *Fort Kullyspell* was part of. The battleship *Scharnhorst* came out of the fjords and set sail to attack the convoy. It was unaware, though, that it was being lured into a carefully designed plan by the Royal Navy. The convoy was being used as bait and the *Scharnhorst* had bitten. On the morning of Dec. 26 the *Scharnhorst* was only an hour away from the Russian-bound convoy. “It was immediately set about by the battleships,” Albert says, “and it was sunk off North Cape, Norway. They gave two Norwegian destroyers the privilege of putting the last torpedoes into the German ship.”

Of the *Scharnhorst*’s crew of 1,986 men, only 36 survived. Because of the danger of German submarines, Allied boats were ordered to leave the area, so were unable to pick up many survivors.

Albert’s home town of Kingston Upon Hull was also experiencing the devastation of the war. It was one of the most targeted cities by the Nazis. The ‘Hull Blitz’ was Germany’s campaign to cripple the city because of its importance as a port and industrial centre. Air raids began June 19, 1940 and continued until 1945. Air raid shelters were built down the centre of each terrace. The city spent more than 1,000 hours under alert. About 5,000 homes were destroyed, as well as 14 schools and 27 churches. 1,185 persons were killed, a fifth of them being children.

Still at home in Hull were five of Albert’s brothers and sisters, and his parents. When a bombing alert would be sounded the Smith family would head to the air raid shelter for safety. The shelter was a long, narrow building with a concrete partition going down the middle. During one air raid the bombs destroyed the outer supports of the building causing the middle to begin collapsing. Albert’s father braced himself against the wall and yelled to his family, “Get out! Get the kids out!” The episode left him with a permanent injury, but his wife and children were safe.

While on leave in 1943 Albert came back to Hull and began looking for his family. He hired a taxi and searched for 24 hours. The driver said that maybe Albert should pay him and let it go. But Albert persisted. “I found them in a broken down old shop,” he says, “on Daltry Street. There were bedrooms above the shop.” The Smith family home had been destroyed. “My mother had a beautiful home, the first time in her life. It was bombed,” Albert says.

During his leave home, Albert also got engaged to married. Albert’s father, himself, had served in World War One, joining up when only sixteen. “He was a sharp shooter, similar to a sniper,” Albert

says. “He was in the Yorkshire Light Infantry. They did more steps quicker than any other infantry. He served in the Alps in Italy. After they finished there they sent him on to Cairo.”

Albert was on Juno Beach a couple of days after the Allied invasion at Normandy. “They had it rough, I’ll tell you, them lads. Some Canadian boys came out to our ship in a Duck, an amphibian craft” Albert remembers, “They asked me if I could bake them some bread. I said I couldn’t but that I would bake them some rolls and biscuits. They headed back to shore with them”.

“Word came from Montgomery, the leader of the British troops, that he needed more men to rescue the city of Caen. We stood on the hatch of our boat and watched all the planes overhead, and a thousand paratroopers coming down, each group in a different colour, I assume to show what regiment they belonged to. At night time you could see the searchlights. The lights would reflect off the low lying clouds back onto the battlefield, helping the soldiers.”

Albert and his shipmates were ordered ashore. “I ended up in a trench,” he says, “alongside a Canadian soldier. You could hear the guns blasting. I said to the soldier, ‘The bloody guns are getting nearer. ’ He was a proper Tommy, and assured me they were further away than I thought. I said, ‘I wish I was back on board my ship.’ He said ‘I won’t be aboard a ship with this bloody lot!’ The beach was just littered with German hand grenades, the ones with the wooden handles. They must have been duds because they didn’t go off.”

Albert was in Antwerp, Belgium, when the war was declared over. Churchill gave a speech over the radio around 10 or 10:30 a.m.. “Everybody in Antwerp was going about celebrating,” Albert says, “I went on the streets with the troops, blowing a trumpet.” Albert recalls life in Hull before the war. “I remember a Jewish barber” he says, “named Mr. Wolf, a nice jolly fellow. He had a shop with a red and white striped pole out front on Hessle Road, a street just up from us. A bunch of Germans came ashore and smashed the windows of Mr. Wolf’s shop and tore down the striped pole. You could tell things were going to happen.”



## Albert Smith's war medals, transcript of a letter from the Russian Government

July 3, 2015.

Dear Mr. Smith.

As the Consular Representative of the Russian, on behalf of The Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa, I have the honour to inform You that the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Alexander Darchiev, as representative of the President of the Russian Federation, wishes to recognize the heroic contribution of Veterans who took part in the Murmansk Convoy Runs during World War II.

Over the past months these Veterans of the Allied Forces have been presented with the Ushakov Russian State Medal. The decree to award You this decoration was signed by the President of the Russian Federation in 2014 and has been confirmed by the Government of Canada. I assure you that the Russian people are well aware of the truly decisive role and the heroic sacrifice of Canadians and Newfoundlanders during the Murmansk Convoy runs, to bring supplies and weapons to the USSR at a critical stage in the war.

Considering the important anniversary date this year, the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Victory, which we celebrated in Canada on May 8, Ambassador Darchiev would like to commend your courageous service by presenting to you, as a Murmansk Convoy Veteran, with this prestigious decoration.



Alberts Medals, including the Ushakov Russian State Medal



## GOODBYE THELMA - 'ELLO' TEBRO

The Humber tug '*Lady Thelma*' re-named '*Tebro*' sailed on Wednesday 4th of December, 1985 bound for her new owners in Italy. She sailed with an Italian crew together with skipper James Gamble and Chief Engineer Don Jackson.

It was a poignant moment for the two Humber Tug's men as they had been responsible for the original delivery of the tug, from her builders at Appledore, over 19 years ago. Capt. Gamble said "We've been with her for a long time. It's unlikely that anyone has served more time on the tug, during her period of service, than the two of us. We are sorry to see her go."

"*Lady Thelma*" was the first fire-fighting tug on the River Humber - but has since been 'out-gunned' by the more potent fire fighting abilities of '*Lady Stephanie*' and '*Lady Susan*'

A representative of the Italian owners, Mr. DiStafano, said he was 'delighted to be taking delivery of his beautiful "New" ship.'



Lady Thelma

## 1961 New command for Capt. Alfred Varley

Serviceman gets a new look

Capt. A. Varley and radio operator Mr R. J. Depree, who have sailed for the same tug company for a total of 64 years, have become shipmates for the first time in the most distinctive unit of the United Towing Company's fleet.

Their ship, the *Serviceman*, has just been handed back to the company with a completely new look, and two-and-a-half times her previous power, after being converted from steam to diesel.

Her "open" look has given way to a squat, powerful appearance, but the most striking difference is in her funnel.

Instead of the high, black-topped white stack which has always been a feature of the company's tugs, she has a short, streamlined funnel of the type now fitted to trawlers.

Standing in the modern, enclosed bridge of his new command, Capt. Varley told me, "I have been in tugs close on 40 years and this is the first diesel tug I have commanded. This is a vast improvement."

"When I first started tugs were really crude. They were a real fresh air job." Capt. Varley commanded the *Airman* for 14 years and took over the converted *Serviceman* after completing a towing job to Istanbul in Turkey.

Mr Depree, who has been with the company for 24 years, and was 20 years deep-sea before that, was previously in the *Tradesman*.

"I have known Capt. Varley ever since I have been on this job, but this will be the first time we have sailed together, and we are hoping for the best" he said with a chuckle. Like Capt. Varley, he regarded the modifications to the *Serviceman* as a great improvement.

The *Serviceman* was built at Selby in 1945 as an Empire class tug.

The conversion has given her 2,000 indicated horsepower against her previous 800, and has increased her speed from nine knots to 13-1/2 . She can now go 52 days without fresh fuel or water compared with her old endurance of 27-28 days.



Serviceman [Empire Stella 1945]

“She will be able to go anywhere in the world, but we should have to be guided by circumstances” said Mr H. Vertican, managing director of the company.

The conversion was carried out by the Drypool Engineering and Dry Dock Co., Ltd. and involved the removal of fuel tanks, machinery, boiler, ancillary pipe lines and all electrical installations.

It made more space available for accommodation, and a messroom, galley, chief engineer’s cabin, and cabins for the second and third engineers have been built into the area formerly occupied by the boiler uptakes.

There is total accommodation for a crew of 18, which is one more than required before, and the furnishings are in light oak with moquette upholstery.

The *Serviceman* has also been fitted with an automatic towing winch and, apart from the *Welshman*, one of the biggest tugs in the world, is the only tug of the company to be equipped with such gear.

“The conversion has brought her into line with modern trends” said Mr Vertican. “The increasing size of merchant ships was also taken into consideration.”

“It is possible that we shall be converting some of our other tugs.”



Serviceman on trials after being converted

## NORTH SEA COLLISION

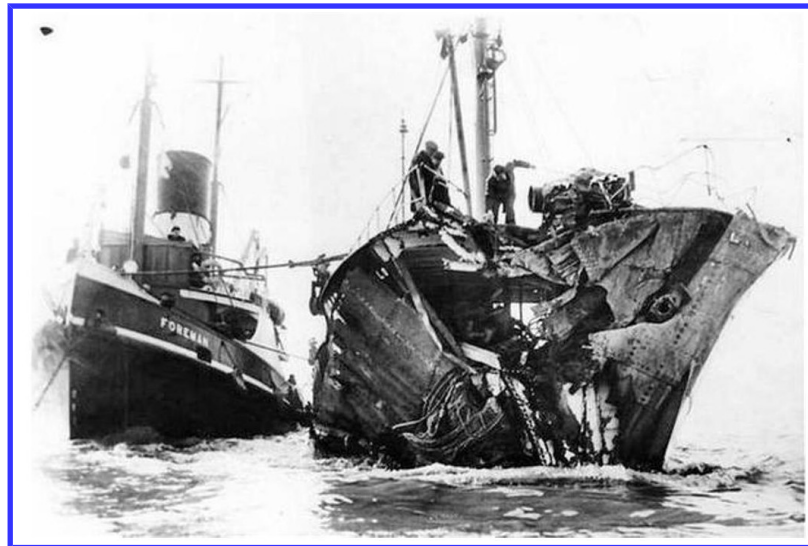
March 1960

The Hull trawler *Loch Melfort* was badly damaged by a collision in the North Sea in the afternoon of Thursday March 10, 40 years ago. Her bows and stern were severely damaged, she was holed forward, but the forecastle bulkheads were holding.

The other vessel involved in the crash was the Indian-owned *Jaladhir* (6,527 tons), and was on her way from Dundee to Antwerp.

The Hull tug *Foreman* raced to the aid of the *Loch Melfort*, which was on her way to the fishing grounds when the collision occurred about 65 miles northeast of the Humber. However she was prevented from reaching the crippled vessel quickly because of thick fog at the mouth of the Humber. No one was hurt by the collision.

The *Loch Melfort* (490 tons) was owned by the Loch Fishing Co. of Hull. A motor vessel, she was built by Cochrane and Sons, Selby, in 1953.



*Foreman and Loch Melfort*



*Jaladhir*

Her skipper was Mr. William Moon of Scarborough. The vessel was managed by Hellyers (Associated) Ltd. and had a crew of 20.

Formerly the *Prince Charles*, she ran aground on the North Norwegian coast in December, 1955 and eventually sank. She was later salvaged and brought back to England where she was refitted and given her new name.

The following day the Hull Daily Mail reported how the trawler was brought safely back to Hull: "with her bow crumpled and flattened as if by a giant hand, the Hull trawler *Loch Melfort* lay in the Humber of St. Andrew's Dock this afternoon. Securely lashed to her side, anchor straining against a six-knot tide, lay the tug *Foreman*, which had succeeded in bringing the wounded trawler home under nightmare conditions of fog and the constant threat of swamping."

"The extent of the damage left riverside watchers wondering how the vessel had remained afloat. There was a gaping hole 6ft by 8ft across her bows, which were a tangle of shattered metal. Part of the plating on the starboard side of the bow was peeled back like tinfoil from a bar of chocolate."

"A trawl net, hawsers and piles of timber and ship's furniture were plugged into the gap, testifying to the desperate efforts of the crew to keep out the swirling waters as the trawler was painfully hauled home. The ship's lifeboat was swung out on its davits and the yellow life rafts were still inflated and ready for use"

Skipper Moon agreed to allow journalists to go on board but representatives of the owners and insurance underwriters refused permission.



**The letter below was received from Mr. Ian Dodd, who's Father was chief engineer with the 'Englishman'. The letter refers to the movements of the 'Englishman' when based at Campbeltown prior to her loss in January 1941.**

In 1938, my father took me to the *Englishman* for the day, and a very enjoyable day it was. I was down in the engine room most of the time with my dad and that afternoon we were doing short towing jobs bringing ships into King George dock.

In September 1939, when war broke out, the largest of UTC Tugs were requisitioned by the Admiralty '*Englishman*' '*Superman*' '*Seaman*' were transferred to Campbeltown to be based at the new rescue tug facility.

My father took out a long lease for a large flat in Campbeltown and my mother, grandmother, sister and I bid a sad farewell to 20 Ellesmere Avenue in Hull and moved up to Campbeltown at the beginning of the 1940s. The '*Englishman*' by this time was divested of her black and white UTC colours and painted battleship grey as were all the other tugs and naval ships based there. During 1940, the '*Englishman*', '*Superman*' and '*Seaman*' were working flat out on convoy work saving the casualties that had not actually been sunk by the U-boats and towing them into a safe haven. I hardly ever saw my father during this period as he was at sea almost continually. This was the 'happy time' for the U-boats and they were wreaking havoc on our convoys, every Saturday a couple of friends and I would go to Machrihanish on the west coast of Kintyre. The rocks and the beaches there were covered with oil at the tidal mark, from the ships that had been sunk by the U-boats, and there were cases and cases of 'blown' tins of meat etc., which had surfaced from the holds of the sunken merchant ships which had been picked off by the U-boats.

During this period, the '*Englishman*' had a refit at Ardrossen, no doubt to refurbish the overworked engines.

On August 23rd 1940 the SS '*Cumberland*' was torpedoed and had her stern blown off, in spite of which she was still afloat, which enabled the '*Englishman*' to get a line aboard and take her in tow. Unfortunately, in spite of the salvage efforts, she sank in the early afternoon of the following day.

At approximately 23:30 on the 30th August 1940 the 15,500-ton Netherlands liner '*Volendam*' was torpedoed west of Mull. She was taken in tow by the rescue tugs '*Englishman*' and '*Salvonia*'. On the morning of 15th September 1940 the tanker '*Coronda*' was bombed by enemy aircraft and the '*Superman*' sailed from Greenock to tow her into port.

On the 26th October 1940 the Canadian Pacific Liner '*Empress of Britain*' was bombed by a German Focke Wulf aircraft off the coast of Ireland. The rescue tugs '*Thames*' (Dutch) and '*Marauder*' were despatched from Campbeltown and the rescue tug '*Seaman*' sailed from Londonderry. But, unfortunately, all was in vain because the '*Empress of Britain*' sank early on the 27th October.

On the 11th January 1941 the rescue tug '*Seaman*' was attacked by a four engine German Focke Wulf aircraft, the bombs from which missed their target, anti-aircraft fire from the '*Seaman*' resulted in the Focke Wulf being brought down.

During the morning of 22nd January 1941 a message was received from the '*Englishman*' saying that she was being attacked by enemy aircraft. The result was she went down with all hands and so ended her gallant story.



## A MONTH IN THE LIFE OF A TUGMAN

By Pete Elsom

Extracts from a 1969 diary. Continued from B. P. No 3

Monday 20th January 1969

00:01 on passage to the rig "*Constellation*". Had a few choice words with the Chief Engineer, over a personal matter, which happened a few months ago. Weather is pretty good, slight sea and swell. Came off watch at 04:00 and turned in.

09:30 called out to make fast to the "*Constellation*", 10:30 wire aboard and all fast holding rig steady whilst they jack down.

12:30 on watch, towing "*Constellation*" to new location. "*Irishman*" fast on starboard bow, "*Masterman*" fast on Port bow, we are fast on the Port Quarter and "*Scaldis*" is fast on the Starboard Quarter. Came off watch at 16:00. 17:00 weather has freshened a lot and the forecast is bad. The rig has decided to jack back down where they are, and await a more favorable forecast, 18:00 Rig jacked up. 19:00 slipped our towing gear, retrieved the gear and stowed away for 20:00. Had a shower and read for a while, before going on watch.

Tuesday 21st January 1969

00:01 on watch dodging near to the "*Constellation*". Nothing happened during the watch. Came off watch at 04:00 had breakfast and turned in.

11:45 called out for watch, working in the hold, trying to move 400 fathoms of wire, which had moved during the bad weather and was stopping a watertight door from shutting, but without taking a lot of gear out of the hold and onto the deck we couldn't do it, so it stays where it is for the time being. Off watch at 16:00 did some dhobying and finished my book.

Wednesday 22nd January 1969

00:01 on watch. Weather is pretty good again now, but there is no movement anywhere. I don't think they want to get this rig on location! Skipper and Chief Engineer are having a call to the office tomorrow, to advise them that we must return to Hull for repairs, it appears that everything is falling to pieces. 04:00 came off watch and turned in.

11:45. Called out for watch. Had dinner and went up to the wheelhouse. The weather is really nice now, but they tell us on the rig that the forecast is bad. 14:00 shipping forecast gives us North Westerly 2 to 3!!

15:30 they have decided to jack down and make a move. 16:00 towing gear brought up from the hold, and coiled on the tray aft, shackled up and then passed by messenger to the rig. That must be the quickest I have ever seen it done. 18:00 the rig is afloat and we are towing at full revs. if we manage 5 knts we should be on the new location by midnight. Then we shall find out if we go to the "*Orion*" or Hull for repairs. We could be home for lunchtime tomorrow, or still out here towing rigs around. Came off watch at 16:00. Passed time in general and read for a while before turning in.



Thursday 23rd January 1969

00:01 on watch towing the “*Constellation*” to its new location. 02:00 arrived on location, so much for ETAs. Holding rig in position. 04:00 came off watch and turned in. Still trying to get the rig in the right position. 10:00 called out to shorten the towing gear in. 11:00 towing gear recovered, stowed and secured and all finished on deck. On passage to Hull for repairs, which will be carried out overnight. We sail again in the morning.

12:30. On watch, on passage to Hull. Sent a telegram home. Should arrive in Hull just after tea sometime. Weather calm. 16:00 came off watch, had a shower and shave. Spurn light vessel abeam at 17:15. Off Alexandra dock at 18:45. 20:30 all tied up and on my way home for the rest of the night. Had a very pleasant night at home!!

Friday 24th January 1969

09:30. Rang Arrow Taxis to take me back to the ship. Taxi arrived 09:45. Jean and Joan came with me down to the dock and then went back home in the taxi. Left the dock at 14:00 and tied up on Alexandra dock jetty. We are just waiting for the fitters to finish off their work. 17:00 let go and proceeding to the “*Orion*”. A tanker to Falmouth and four rig moves in 24 days isn’t too bad. What next? “*Orion*” moving 105 miles to new location. Everything stowed away. 17:30 had tea, then had a shower. Arrived “*Orions*” location at 21:00 and dropping anchor. Listened to records, then on deck rigging the towing gear. Then listened to records again, before going on watch.

Saturday 25th January 1969

00:01 on watch, laid at anchor alongside the “*Orion*”. Nothing much happening so far. Came off watch at 04:00 and turned in. 06:00 connected up to rig. Apparently I was called out to help, but never heard a thing, so didn't get up. Not good! 11:45 called out for watch. 12:30 on watch towing the “*Orion*” to its new location. Weather is good, speed is 4 to 5 knts. Should be on new location in twenty four hours. Then it looks as though our next job will be to tow the “*Sea Quest*” to Antwerp for repairs and maintenance. 16:00 off watch, did some dhobying and read some mail. During the evening we played cards, then I started a new book, before turning in for a couple of hours before watch.

Sunday 26th January 1969

00:01 on watch towing “*Orion*” to new location, skipper is up and about too. All quiet. Came off watch 04:00 and turned in. 11:45 called out for watch. Was told that we are to proceed home to Hull as soon as we have completed the “*Orion*”, possible we have to tow the Crane Barge “*Magnus*” to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

12:30 on watch towing the “*Orion*” due on new location at 17:00, Apart from that there is not a lot happening, but the wind has freshened quite a bit. 18:30 still 5 miles to go. 20:00 on location and holding the rig in position whilst they jack up. 23:30 towing gear shortened in up to nylon rope. We are now told that the rig could be 50 feet off position, so they are keeping us on charter until tomorrow morning, when they will get a fresh set of “*Decca*” readings. Came off watch at 16:00 , had a shower then relieved Terry for his tea. Had mine and turned in at 19:00. Called out for watch at 23:45.

To be continued in the next issue

## Sinking of the *Guardsman*

25-11-1940

Hull tug *Guardsman* struck a mine near the North-East Spit buoy. The tug sank very quickly.

Seven of the crew of nine survived and managed to cling to floating wreckage. Difficulties were experienced in hauling them aboard the lifeboat. The skipper had become wedged in his lifebuoy and had to be dragged over the gunwale with it still on.

More difficult was the problem with another crew member who had become inextricably entwined in a long wooden ladder; his head, arms and legs were through the rungs. He and the ladder, with much exertion, were hauled aboard and the only way he could be released was by sawing the ladder away. He was much relieved but glad of the support it had given him.

The 102-ton *Guardsman* dated from 1905, having served in the First World War in the Downs.



## Letter from Jim Uney

Dear Mrs Whitlam,

Thank you so very much for the lovely gesture shown in providing us with a copy of The United Towing and Salvage Society Magazine in which my story "Timber Galore" appears.

Of course, the attached close up photographs which have been inserted add much further interest to the story, I remember the scene very well but the black and white photo's which you have provided is an added bonus.

I didn't have a camera in those days, or a pair of binoculars in which to view the very busy shipping movements on the River Humber, but whenever I return to Paull now, I remember those days, when the tugs were kept very busy towing large Esso and Shell tankers, and Athel ships off the jetties at Saltend, Athel boats brought Cuban Blackstrap Molasses to Hull Distillery for distillation to alcohol. It tasted marvellous, the molasses, not the alcohol!

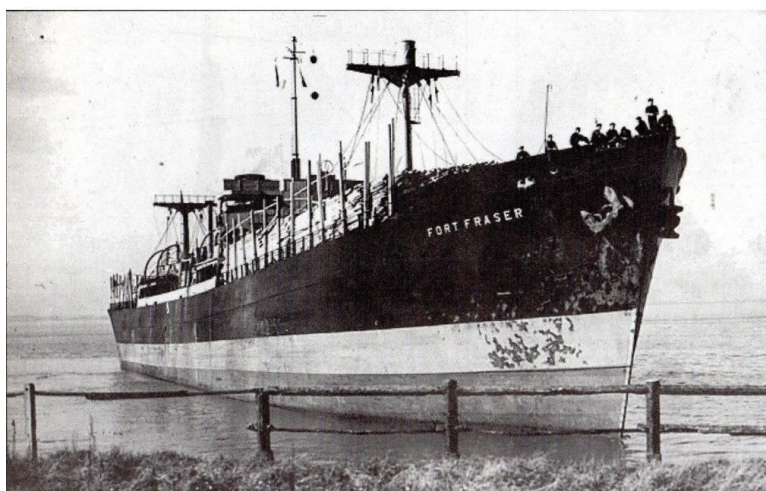
Other shipping on the river consisted of trawlers, colliers, and passenger boats, (Borodino) I think belonged to The Wilson Line, and other timber loaded vessels with pit props and building timber, the docks bordering Hedon Road was one mass of stacked timber. There would be strings of heavy laden barges all going about their business, and of course your United Towing Companies tugs such as *Yorkshireman*, and *Englishman*, was there a *Masterman*? busying themselves.

All shipping movements were reported daily in the local press, cargo description, inbound from wherever, and departures, and place of destination, I don't think that there is anything resembling that nowadays.

I remember your tugs towing off the stranded *Fort Fraser* which had beached at Paull near to where the gas line which crosses the river is now, she was an ex lease-lend ship I believe, but I cannot remember whether it happened before or after the *Bergsund* incident.

Thank you very much once again for your very interesting and well presented magazine which we will take care of.

Kind regards, Jim Uney, Hedon.



## Trouble at Paull

LEFT: On 12th September 1946, the 7,134 ton cargo ship *Fort Fraser* ran aground within 200 yards of Paull village in dense fog. The ship was bound for Alexandra Dock in Hull from Sweden with one of the biggest cargoes of timber to be carried in a single ship up to that date. The *Fort Fraser* settled on an even keel and was towed free by two powerful tugs on a subsequent high tide.

Hull Daily Mail

## MY TIME AND MEMORIES WITH UNITED TOWING CO. LTD.

By Fred Goodfellow

I joined the company in July 1952 and was taken on as Cabin Boy on the *Masterman*. I left the company in 1955. I will try and get my memories of events in the correct order, but I won't guarantee them.

The Captain's name was Fred Christian.

The Chief Engineer was Bill Bass.

The Sparks name was Pete - can't remember his second name but he played an Ocarina.

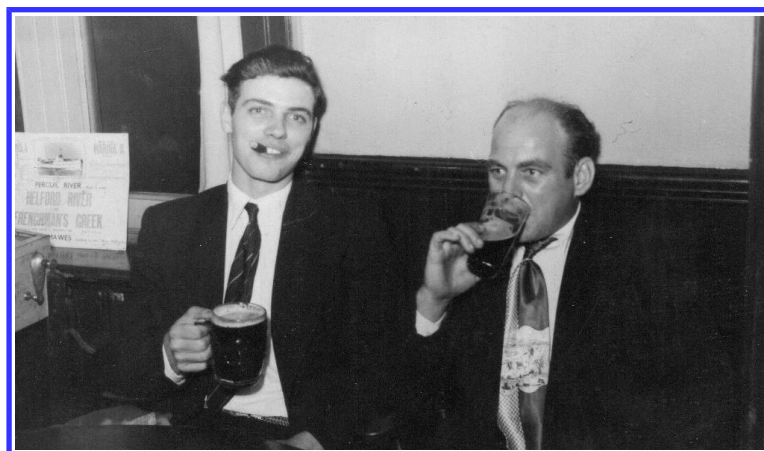
One Deck Hand was called Arthur King (he got made up to 2nd Mate just before I left.)

One Cook was nicknamed Twinks - short for twinkle toes because he had lost most of his toes due to frost bite when the ship he was on during the war was torpedoed and he spent several days in an open lifeboat in the North Atlantic. He did the trip from Bremerhaven to Boston then went back on trawlers.

The main Cook was Jim Cawkwell and he became my stepfather - he was a lovely man.

Another Deck Hand was Alan somebody - he changed his name by Deed Poll to Gene Autry after the famous cowboy film star of the time (what a dick head!)

One of the firemen was called Ben Crow. I remember his name well because one trip to Alexandria, whilst ashore, Ben bought something on the local market. A bit later he met one of the other crew members who had bought the same thing. Ben asked how much he had paid for it. When he found out he had paid substantially more for his, he went back to the market stall and started to create Holy Hell (Ben was a big feller.) He didn't understand about bartering and was demanding some money back. (Asking an Arab for a refund is like asking for the moon). The end result was a police escort back to the ship, and we were advised to leave for our own safety which we did minus the tow.



Arthur King & Jim Cawkwell

We had a Tow From Marseille (France) a passenger ship to Rotterdam for breaking up. The junior deck hand and myself had the opportunity to strip some of the electric wiring from the cabins (it was lead covered and we had done a deal with one of the locals through one of our crew who happened to speak French).

The deal was to put the wiring in sacks, tie it up and lower it on a rope over the stem into his boat below. The very first sack full was being lowered when we heard a shout, it was the night watchman, (bearing in mind the tow was empty and riding very high it was a long way down to the water). The watchman was running aft, we let go of the rope and ran, but not before we saw the sack of lead wire disappear through the bottom of the rowing boat below, we never did find out what the outcome was. Needless to say we didn't get paid.

A major incident occurred one night, several members of the crew were ashore drinking as usual, an American I think, possibly Canadian, got friendly with them in a bar and sat with them, (I was not there at this stage) when I bumped into them they were on there way back to the ship. Jim and one of the other crewmembers were supporting this feller between them, I thought he was drunk. It transpired (so I was told) that this feller had got into an argument with some guy said to be from the Foreign Legion and had been stabbed, all I know is he was dead when I looked at him and both Jim and the other crew member were covered in blood, Jim said he was taking him back to the ship to fix him up. We had one hell of a job to convince Jim he was wasting his time and we finally left him propped up against a wall. My brother Brian will tell you about the problem he had when we got home and he took Jim's suit to the cleaners.

It was whilst in Marseille, we were below and there was a commotion on deck, Bill Bass went up the gangway to see what it was all about, there was a lot of noise I was about to go up the gangway to see what it was when the first mate sent me back down to the mess room, they brought Bill Bass into the mess his face was covered in blood, it transpired that as he had got up on deck he was hit in the face with hurricane lamp, his face was a mass of cuts, I will never know how he didn't lose his sight, Bill said he didn't know who had done it.

As we were berthed in the fish dock at Boston I was walking along the dock with Twinks (our cook) we were watching them fillet the fish, Twinks asked if we could have some fish, he explained where we had come from and pointed out the *Masterman*, they said that anyone who had come all that way in a ship that size must be mad and could have as much fish as he wanted, providing he filleted it himself. Having been a trawler cook Twinks filleted enough fish for the whole crew in double quick time. The Boston guys had never seen it done like that before. The foreman offered Twinks a job for the time we were there, they wanted him to fillet for the top hotels because he never left a bone in, he did a couple of boxes for them as a thank you but that was all.

We had a tow from Gibraltar I believe with the *Merchantman*, an intermediate Passenger/Cargo to Rotterdam again for scrap.

The weather started to pick up a bit the day after we left Gibraltar, it took 11 days to get across the Bay of Biscay, each time my Mother was in Town she went into the office and looked on the board, *Masterman* Bay of Biscay - *Masterman* Bay of Biscay - *Masterman* Bay of Biscay. She finally went to the desk and asked how big was the Bay of Biscay 365 miles she was told, Christ she said he could walk it quicker. The only reason she wanted to know was so that she could get my suit out of Uncles before I got home.

After we dropped the tow off we raced the *Merchantman* back to Hull, the *Merchantman* should have beaten us easy, but she blew a gland seal, I had Bill Bass explain to me what it was. I used to get down in the engine room every opportunity I could, I loved to see those three legs going up and down and the smell of steam. Bill taught me how to oil the dashpots and to start the diesel generator and I was allowed to start it on my own when in dock, he was like a father to me (I didn't have one at that time).



I remember a funny incident in Milford Haven, well it was funny to some of us. I don't recall why we were there, we tried to anchor in the haven but we kept dragging the anchor, so we went alongside. We went ashore but as I was too young I was not allowed to go in the local, so I had a walk round and went back to the ship. Later when I heard them coming back (singing) I went up on deck just in time to see Bill Bass disappear into the dock. We fished him out coughing and spluttering, and he swore blind that someone had moved the gangplank. We realised what had happened, the light above the gangplank had been set to one side and had cast a shadow in the water, and Bill having his vision slightly blurred had mistaken it for the real thing, but we never did convince Bill of this, he still insisted someone had moved it.

I remember we were on salvage station at Falmouth, we went to relieve *Englishman* who had had a call. We were there for about 6 weeks, we didn't get a call whilst we were there. I remember one day the liberty boat was going ashore Bill Bass and one other in it. Some 400 yards or so from the ship the engine failed, and like true sailors they had not put the oars aboard. Bill fiddled with the engine for a while then called for me to swim out to him with a messenger tied round my waist. It was summer time, the water was warm, so why not. Believe me it doesn't matter how well you can swim, with even a small rope tied to you, when it gets wet it gets heavy and I was getting knackered, to crown it all just as I was getting near the stranded boat, Bill got the engine going, that was the good part, the bad part was he wouldn't pick me up, I had to swim back to the ship, at least I could let the rope go.

There was also a USA Naval vessel at anchor whilst we were there and we got pretty friendly with them. It came up in conversation ashore one time that all USA Naval vessels have ice cream making machines, they wouldn't sail without one, bearing in mind this was in the fifties. So we got a white enamelled bucket one day and took it over and they almost filled it for us (funny the things you remember)

We went on Salvage station to Ferrol inside the Bay of Biscay, we were there for three months, during which time we had a call out one evening, most of the crew were ashore at the time in the local bar, myself included, by the time the Captain had finished blowing the whistle off the funnel and we had finally got ourselves together and got back on board, it was too late. The ship in distress had made her own way into Ferrol . She was called the *Trasilion*, a cargo vessel. We heard a few months later that she had gone down somewhere. The photograph is of most of us in the bar in Ferrol.

By this time Jim Cawkwell was my stepfather. When we arrived home Jim paid off in debt, he had been subbing, I paid off with 3 shillings & 6 pence, this was after 3 months away. I was lucky I had some salvage money to come, (Most of which Jim borrowed for keeps) otherwise my mother would have killed him. I had been a deck hand on the docking tug *Headman* whilst the *Masterman* was being converted from coal to oil burning.

The *Headman*, I was on her as I said above, most of the time docking. This is where I got my salvage money from, an easy one, straight out of the dock just off Paull. A coaster lost her engines, rope on, back in the dock, job done, a couple of hours.

We had one interesting tow, a big cylindrical tank, it was part of a refinery and too big to go by road, we had to tow it from the Thames near Tilbury to Greenock in Scotland. We had to mount batteries and lights on the tank, but when we started to tow, it listed to Port so that the lights could not be seen from starboard, so we stopped and moved the lights over to the starboard side, the theory being it would go over to port again but stop when the lights were upright, but no it just went all the way over to port again so we left it and towed it with both lights visible from one side only. We got it there OK with no more trouble.

On the way home I was on the wheel, it was a glorious day, the sea was a mill pound, land was in sight all the way, I saw something in the distance dead ahead, got the binoculars on it and it looked just like a mine, it wasn't even bobbing up and down, it was so calm. I wasn't concerned, what would a mine be doing in the North Sea on a lovely summers day, the wars been over for 9 years. I was so fascinated by this I forgot it was dead ahead. I suddenly realised it was a mine, spikes and all. I swung the wheel so hard over the skipper fell out of his bunk, he came tearing up to the bridge to give me a bollocking but when he saw why he let me off, the position of the mine was reported to the authorities.

Pete,

I don't know if any of this will help you in any way, I know some of what I've written seems like fantasy but believe me it happened. I am not very good at dates or names, If I come across any old photos I will send them on.

Regards

Fred Goodfellow



In August-September 1953 *Masterman*, *Tradesman* and *Rifleman* each towed two trawlers from Bremerhaven to Boston Mass. Though *Rifleman* had to make a stop at the Azores to refuel.



## *Alice L. Moran*



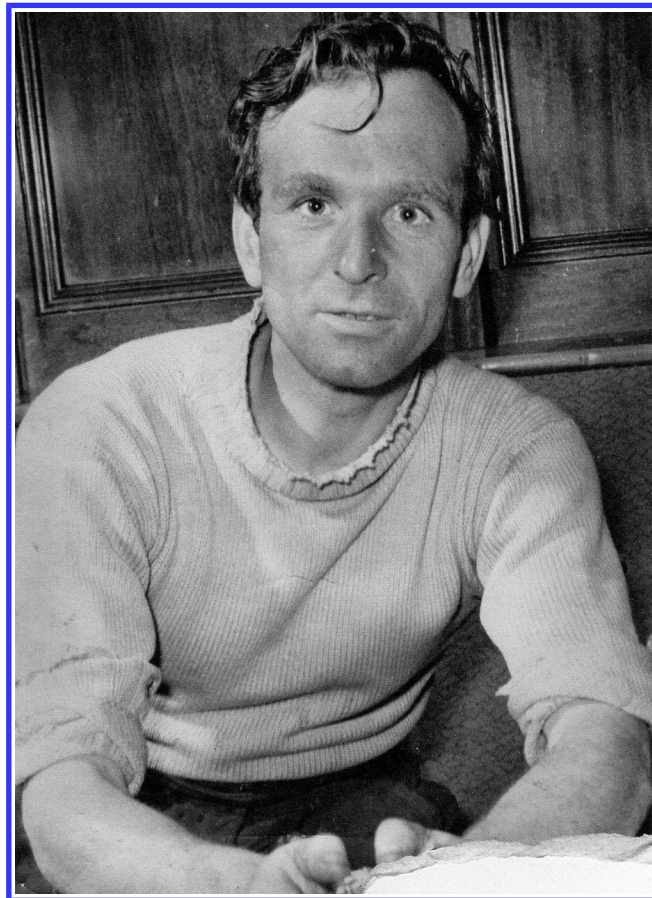
A photograph taken at Falmouth on the occasion of *Alice L. Moran* coming to collect the *AFD5* ( floating dock ). Alongside the local tug *St Agnes*. We all know *Alice L Moran* was later chartered and then sold to U.T.Co. and renamed *Statesman*, but what was *St Agnes* former name when she belonged to U.T.Co. ?

Photo courtesy of Dave Proud, Falmouth.

## PERSONALITY PORTRAIT

Photo and article from the Hull & Yorkshire Times. Saturday June 14th 1952

Dan Betts (snr), mate of the *Norman*, a thin faced man with a hooked nose and of spare build, has the look of an Elizabethan sea-dog. Only the beard is lacking. During the war he was on escort vessels in the Atlantic and on Russian convoys. Once he went over the side and swam around helping rescue the crew of a torpedoed ship, but if you ask him about it he changes the subject. Once he was a trawlerman, but his wife thought he had been away long enough so he joined the tugs. He has been mate of the *Norman* for four years. And between him and skipper exists a friendly comradeship and mutual respect.





## Hull tug men get Falklands accolade

TRIBUTES were paid today to the crew of Britain's most powerful tug, the Hull-based Salvageman, for their role in the Falklands conflict.

The tug was moored alongside HMS Belfast in London, to receive a brass plaque from the Admiralty Board in recognition of her role in the South Atlantic. The plaque was handed to Capt. Alan Stockwell by Capt. Nick Barker, who led the recapture of Southern Thule aboard HMS Endurance — an operation in which Salvageman took part.

Salvageman is owned by United Towing, part of the North British Maritime group with headquarters in Hull.

The vessel was requisitioned in April 1982 and set sail with the Task Force. Salvageman was the first merchant vessel to reach the operation area — arriving in South Georgia in May. During the initial conflict, she was involved in helping a number of damaged Royal Navy vessels.

Capt. Barker said the work done by Salvageman was "outstanding."

Today's presentation was preceded yesterday by the award of Falkland Islands Battle Honours to the tug. Salvageman arrived back in Hull in June having been away for 806 days - the longest serving member of the original task force. She will be going back to the South Atlantic in October to commence a further six months charter with the Ministry of Defence for operation in South Georgia. Salvageman was also involved in delicate salvage operations on the captured Argentine submarine Santa Fe. She will be involved in more work on the Santa Fe when she returns

## SEPTEMBER 1961. Welshman heeling over in Victoria Dock.

### Flooded Hull tug heels in dock

The Hull tug *Welshman* - one of the biggest ocean-going tugs in the world began to heel over in Victoria Dock, Hull, today.

The *Welshman* took a 45 degree list as water flooded into her engine room.

As a small coastal tanker, the *Oarsman*, prevented the tug from smashing against the quayside, engineers and Hull firemen fought to pump her out.

Firemen were still working this afternoon to right the tug before tonight's five o'clock tide.

But as fast as water was pumped out it flooded in again.

Engineers were still in the dark about where the water was entering the ship and were trying to clear the engine room first.

#### PACIFIC TASK

The *Welshman* - formerly the Admiralty tug *Growler* - had just come out of Central Dry Dock after repairs following her recent return from the Pacific, where she spent several months towing obsolete American carriers to the Far East.

She was berthed alongside the *Oarsman* to complete engine repairs.

Mr W. Wrotney, mate of the *Oarsman*, told the Hull Daily Mail that he woke at about 6.15 and saw the *Welshman* listing badly alongside.

#### CAUSE NOT KNOWN

"I roused the nine members of the *Oarsman*'s crew because I did not know what was going to happen." He said. "She was listing more and more towards us"

Mr R. Shepherd, managing director of Drypool Engineering and Dry Dock Co. Ltd. who supervised pumping operations, said that it was not known what caused the tug to flood. Hull firemen were called about 6.30 am.

The *Welshman*, commanded by Captain Tim Bond, lay with muddy dock water covering about a foot of her decks on the port side.

Whether the *Oarsman* has suffered any damage by the pressure of the tug against her is not yet known. The *Oarsman* was built by the Drypool Engineering and Dry Dock Co. Ltd.

## **WELSHMAN BACK ON EVEN KEEL**

The Hull tug *Welshman* was lying normally at her berth in Victoria Dock today after the accident which should never have happened.

The tug heeled over to 45 degrees early yesterday after water began pouring into the engine-room through a valve which had been left open.

It took firemen and engineers 11 hours to pump her dry.

The tug had just come out of the Central Dry Dock, where the only underwater work carried out was painting, when she began to list.

Mr H. Vertican, managing director of the United Towing Co. Ltd., said today that damage was being assessed, but it was believed to be very slight.

He added that the accident should not have happened and that enquiries were being made.

