

HOMeward BOUND – A LIVERPOOL-WEST AFRICA MARITIME HERITAGE INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Interviewee: Harry Madden

Interviewer: Nick White

Date: 17/03/2016

File Name: HMHB001/HMHB002

[00:40] Description of role as cadet engineer – responsibilities included engine room, air compressors, boiler; [03:10] changing responsibilities with different rank; [06:40] cadet accommodation on *Eboe*; [08:10] training at Riversdale College; [10:30] reason for working for Elder Dempster – wanderlust; extended family tradition of seafaring; -12:00] job advertised in paper, interview at India Buildings – job offer contingent on 4 ‘O’ levels; [13:45] first pay cheque £28, bought a pack of Black Russian cigarettes in North John St tobacconist; [14:55] pay and conditions at Riversdale College; salary scale; extra month’s pay at Christmas; [17:00] good relations with management, good discipline; reporting to marine superintendent after voyage; [20:30] training - two years at Riversdale College; learning on the job once at sea; recollection of heat and noise; [22:15] most challenging job – working on main engine piston; [24:30] Family life – letters via agent in Tower Buildings; letters on surfboats from port; [25:10] Anecdote re: loading logs in Douala, later meeting force 9 winds in Bay of Biscay – put letter in bottle overboard; [27:30] first voyage from Tilbury during dock strike; sailed to Rotterdam; buried someone at sea wrapped in Union Jack flag; [29:30] onto Las Palmas, then Dakar; first impressions of Africa – smell of vegetation, poverty everywhere; women on docks doing hair, also witchdoctors, music; [31:45] limited prior knowledge of West Africa; the ‘white man’s grave’, awareness of slave trade; civil war in Nigeria meant no access to creeks; [32:45] subsequent impressions – infrastructure in Lagos falling apart; culture of corruption; [33:40] anecdote re: arrest in Lagos; Westerners in Lagos, US peace forces; [36:20] Ghana favourite African country; also liked Sierra Leone; [37:00] fishing as hobby – anecdote re: cheese as bait for catfish; [38:00] Anecdote re: bringing parrot named Chairman Mao back to Liverpool on the *Eboe* to sell to petshop in Tithebarn St; sold to a taxidriver for £30; [40:00] race relations – no problems, staff mostly Igbo; ‘Dhobi’ man for laundry; tailor in Las Palmas for tropical kit; [42:30] food on board – soups, bread, fish, curries; special meal for Christmas Day; [44:20] Cargoes – palm oil in tanks; competition with other companies; [46:00] company treated staff well – family bereavement; [46:30] Passengers on *Eboe* – priests, diplomatic services staff; minimal contact with passengers, engineers socialised together; [47:10] record player available – Buddy Holly, Clancy Bros., The Beatles; Chief Engineer played classical music; [49:50] interactions with Masters; cabin inspections by the Master; [51:00] reflection that job as purser might have been more suitable; [51:30] social activities – swapping films with other ships; anchor sweep (estimate time of arrival in port); football matches; [53:00] sound of bullfrogs in Takaradi; African art for sale on docks; [53:45] buying pineapples to eat on board the ship; [54:00] recollection of being at sea when man first landed on the moon.

END OF TRACK 1 – HMHB001

TRACK 2- HMHB002

[00:15] Continental ports – Rotterdam, lively, red light district; seamans’ missions, possibility to socialise; Lisbon; [03:30] Madeira - four hours ashore, in nightclub when agent came to find ED crew, ship already 20 foot off the quayside, had to scramble across on bunkering pipes as a ladder; fined half a month’s wages; [05:10] missed ferry in Lisbon while socialising; [06:50] never visited US; [07:15] social life on board – writing letters, reading, stamp collections, World Service on radio; beer and

HOMeward BOUND – A LIVERPOOL-WEST AFRICA MARITIME HERITAGE

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

cigarette allowance; [09:00] legend of ship haunted by mad engineer; [09:40] Pre-sailing training course in lifeboat and fire training at Speke airport; [11:20] experience of National Service useful in going to sea; [12:00] minimal experience of containerisation; [13:45] Dock workers in Lagos, asking for 'dash-me-o'; only sailed from Liverpool once; Tilbury no experience of dock workers as engineer; [14:40] left ED in 1969, sorrow at end of ED; [15:50] abiding memory – with father on Birkenhead Ferry; [17:30] recollection of rivalry between ED and Blue Funnel; [19:00] did not maintain contact with colleagues; final anecdote of mimicking a senior staff member, caught in the act.

END OF INTERVIEW