

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

Interviewee: David Anson

Interviewer: Nick White

Date: 17/05/2016

File Name: DAHB001/DAHB002

[00:40] Description of role of engineer – care and maintenance of machinery; power generation, pumping system, refrigeration; responsible for electrical items; [02:40] Reason for choosing ED – seafaring tradition of father and grandfather at sea; unable to join Liverpool Pilots Service or to become deck officer as suffered colour-blindness [05:00] Description of training as engineer – Birkenhead Tech, Riversdale College; pay rate of £4 and 10 shillings; [6:20] pay and pension scheme [7:20] description of Riversdale House accommodation and social life; [9:00] Work on board ship – watchkeeping, day work; [10:25] Most challenging jobs – when things went wrong; also heat in West Africa; routine of life at sea; [11:40] Homeward bound managing cargo; description of heating containers for transporting oils; [12:40] Difficult cargo of plantains; [13:40] Anecdote re: *Fourah Bay* taking bananas from Takoradi to Liverpool; [14:30] Family life – unmarried when first at sea; later stopped seafaring once had young family [16:30] Early career - first voyage on *Dunkwa*; [18:15] anecdote re: breakdown up creeks in Nigeria, anchored for three days; [19:30] Sealegs no problem; [19:50] Autonomy on board ship – increased with change in rank; [20:30] Ethnic relations on board – description of racial breakdown of officers / deck officers; preference for Sierra Leonean crew over Nigerian crew; [22:10] Brief period of time in Freetown, sympathy for local workers; [22:45] Social life on board – trips in West Africa including Cape Coast Castle, Ghana and James Island in the Gambia; [24:40] voyage on *Fourah Bay*, trips organised for cadets; [25:00] first impressions of West Africa – heat, humidity, poverty; people with disabilities, lack of social services; Biafran War; on first commercial ship (M.V. FIAN) to enter Port Harcourt after liberation by federal forces ; [27:00] Portuguese colonies – difference to British and French colonies; [28:15] Favourite West African country – Ghana; [29:30] little experience working with West African national lines; [30:25] Cargoes – outward bound, anything from locomotives to toilet paper; recollection of 50 ton locomotive over no.2 hatch; [31:30] Homeward bound cargoes – timber, groundnut and palm oil, plantains, timber (sawn and logs); [32:20] Passengers – no passengers on any voyages; [33:40] European ports – similar to British ports; tourist visits to various European ports accompanied by new wife; [35:25] Canadian and US ports – recollection of visit to US in 1964; Beatlemania; dangers in New York; [37:20] Canaries – bunkering port for fuel; taking tomatoes homeward bound; [38:45] fishing as popular pastime on board; discussion of types of fish caught ; reference to stone fish; [41:20] end of career – worked on the Clearway; import/export of saloon vehicles; voyages across the North Sea; [44:00] automation of ships, end of engineers on board; [45:30] Weather – West Africa benign; Bay of Biscay, Spain, Portugal rough; once south of Las Palmas no problem; [46:50] Felixstowe port – very busy; comparison with Liverpool; discussion of labour relations.

END OF TRACK DAHB001

BEGINNING OF TRACK DAHB002

[00:35] Culture and ethos in company, relations with management; recollection of Capt John Smallwood at Riversdale House; sense of being involved and looked after; [3:37] Left EDs in 1972,

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worked with Maersk; [4:00] background to departure – company informing employees via letter re: changes; [6:20] experience with Maersk, difference to ED; description of role; pros and cons of long journeys but secure employment and money; [8:00] impact on family life – four months on/four months off; context of Arab-Israeli war, closure of Suez Canal, fuel shortage resulting in six months away; [10:45] corporate culture of Maersk; [11:40] description of crew – multinational; challenge of communication; [13:00] full automation and resultant changes; comparison of social life with Maersk with ED; [15:00] no experience of containerisation; [15:20] end of seafaring career in 1977 – maintained interest; subscription to ‘Ships Monthly’ magazine; [16:20] awareness and sadness at end of ED; [16:55] Abiding memories – friendships; Fourah Bay Association involvement.

END OF INTERVIEW