

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

Interviewee: Lawrence Aye Maung

Interviewer: Nick White

Date: 10/10/2016

File Name: LAHB001 – LAMHB002

TRACK ONE - LAMHB001

[01:02] Description of first year as cadet – chipping and scraping, general maintenance; using pumice stone to clean the deck; [00:02] Came to Liverpool from Burma to undertake pre-sea training; many other Burmese cadets chose Paddy Hendersons as they sailed to Burma; sailed to Burma in Jan '64; Elder Dempster and Paddy Hendersons merger, sailed on *Pegu* April '63 – June '64; [04:30] attended Riversdale college, Mid-Apprenticeship Release Course; sailed on *Degema* to West Africa; [5:50] visited Ghana and Cameroon, tourist excursions ashore; [06:00] became 3rd officer in 1966; [06:20] Came ashore off the *Aureol* in April '65; attended Liverpool Polytechnic for 2nd mate ticket; sailed on *Pegu* from Feb '66 to Sept '67; [07:55] end of Burma trade in 1968; [08:45] married in 1975 and accompanied by wife at sea; wife seasick on trip to West Africa; [09:55] reasons for choosing to go to sea – scholarship for pre-sea training, no history of seafaring; [11:00] pay and conditions – Paddy Hendersons paid at end of voyage, not monthly like other companies; £82, 1 shilling and 4 pence for 3 months; similar to ED wages; union pay rise while training for 3rd mate's ticket; [12:30] Letters from PH and ED re: merger; discussion of letters; [16:40] Good training; later joined Dept. of Transport examining Mates and Masters, different standard, not as high as with PH and ED; [17:20] cadets gained experience on ships with no deck hands; [18:00] final year cadet took bridge watch alone, building up confidence and experience; [19:15] challenging jobs – cargo planning and stowage plans; navigation using sun and stars; [20:10] anecdote re: German and Russian ships with satellite navigation; [20:40] description of watch-keeping shifts; duties of 1st and 2nd mate; winding of chronometer; [22:45] family life as seafarer – difficult for wife with young kids and also working; [23:50] Keeping in touch by mail; difficulties of maintaining contact with family in Burma – meeting parents in Rangoon; [24:50] Sealegs – usually after a few days, mixture of homesickness and physical illness; [25:50] Life on board – good social life, large crew, bar and smoke room; approx. 8 movies per voyage; BBQs in warm climates; [27:30] contrast with reduced crews of today; [28:30] different nationalities, all got on well; [29:00] contrast of officer behaviour in Blue Funnel with ED; [30:00] List of Burmese crew members and description [attached]; [31:30] Burma run – Birkenhead – Genoa – Suez canal – Port Sudan – Aden – Rangoon; used to meet Burmese colleagues in Liverpool or Genoa; also in River House; [photo attached]; [33:40] Beer rations on PH – 2 per day for cadets, 6 per day for officers; different system in ED; [34:30] Bibby Line – very few Burmese cadets; had Burmese crew; [35:20] description of selecting crew, lines of workers in port hoping to be chosen; [36:30] role of night steward on Burma run vs night steward on ED ships; [38:00] prior knowledge of UK – very little; flew to London as a state scholar of Burmese government with 3 other students; attended Warsash School of Navigation; arrived winter 1962; PH staff mostly based in Glasgow; [40:30] impressions of West Africa – enjoyed visits; Abidjan very modern in contrast to Lagos; ex-French colonies better than British; Portuguese colonies similar to being in continental Europe, nice food, beer and wines, mosaic tiles; [42:50] trips up creek in the Congo; [43:20] Anecdote re: Nigerian crew loading a car, and then an engine, without permission;

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TRACK TWO - LAMHB002

[00:16] Cargo – no involvement on Burma run, mainly machinery outward bound and rice and tea homeward bound; cotton bales at Port Sudan for UK; [01:40] description of visit ashore in Port Sudan; swimming, sea angling; [04:20] duty-free port in Aden, very cheap; Burmese crew would purchase gold sovereigns to bring to Burma instead of pounds; [05:50] crew buying and selling coats and sovereigns; [06:45] anecdote re: marijuana smuggling from Burma to UK – alleged informer thrown overboard in Port Aden; [08:00] ED cargo – logs; use of chains for lashing; limited amount of teak from Burma; [09:00] danger of weather affecting stability, bull wires snapping; [10:10] sawn timber; palm kernels loaded in bulk; [10:40] experience sailing with passengers as a cadet on *Aureol*; [11:45] cadets not allowed to mix with passengers; [13:10] description of socialising on *Ebani*; [14:00] crew accommodation very small in comparison to the passengers'; no natural light; [14:40] Trips to USA; [15:20] Visit to New York; Philadelphia; Washington DC; Mexico; Montreal, St John's New Brunswick in winter; [17:40] Continental trips – Amsterdam; Hamburg; Le Havre; [19:05] period of time working in head office deputising for operations manager; description of role; [21:10] benefit of office work vs being at sea – home every day; [22:30] Left ED in '82; [23:30] difference of working for Ocean Fleets vs working for ED – mostly the same except for the runs; 'Bay Boats' – big containers; [25:00] effect of containerisation; [26:30] description of facilities on Bay Boats; [28:04] facilities on the *Pegu* – v small cabins, no toilet in cabin; [30:10] food on ship very good; [31:00] abiding memories – all good memories, like working for a family; able to discuss leave plans, family situation etc.; [32:00] hospitality of Capt. Smallwood and his wife at River House; [33:00] keep in touch via newsletter, coffee morning, Fourah Bay Association; [33:30] End of ED – saddened at leaving; some years working with Saudi; wanted to come ashore, joined Dept. of Transport examining Masters and Mates; [35:30] involvement with Seaman's Mission, description of role on Board of Trustees.

END OF INTERVIEW