

HOMEWARD BOUND: A Liverpool West Africa Maritime Heritage

INTERVIEWEE'S FULL NAME:	<i>Stephen Ronald New</i>
Discharge Book Number:	<i>R780660</i>
Capacity In Which Employed:	<i>Midshipmen – Cadet Officer</i>
Period of Employment:	<i>1962 - 1966</i>

Interviewer's Full Name:	<i>John Goble</i>
Date of Interview:	<i>22nd February 2016</i>

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HB01 General Questions: 'Personal Memories' **(All ex Elder Dempster Staff)**

01.001a	Q: Can you share with me some details of your career with Elder Dempster lines? ---//--- Where did you live while you were with EDs?
	<p>When I joined EDs and for the period of my apprenticeship I was living with my parents in Acton, West London.--/-- However I also spent two --?-- 3 month periods staying at the company's hostel in Aigburth . That was while attending the 2 Mid-apprenticeship release courses at Riverdale Tech.</p>

01.001b	Q: When did you start? ---/--- What jobs did you do? ---/--- What positions did you hold?
	<p>I started with EDs in October 1962 --/-- As an Indentured deck officer apprentice we were expected to acquire the physical skills of an able seaman, and the knowledge and skills of a qualified deck officer, whether it be navigation or the loading of the ship. --//-- Other than the engine room and the galley, we apprentices would get our hands dirty experiencing every aspect of deck work,--/-- chipping, painting, rigging derricks, lookout duties, steering, cargo work --/-- but to mention a few.</p> <p>During the last year of my apprenticeship I was promoted to 'Cadet Officer', that is effectively 4th Mate. As the title implies, I spent most of this period understudying the qualified deck officers in preparation for sitting my own 2nd mate's exams..</p>

01.001c	Q: Why and when did you finish working for EDs?
	<p>Under the terms of the original 1962 conditions of employment, EDs could exercise a gentlemen's first option on your services once you obtained a 2nd Mates Certificate.</p>

After an arduous apprenticeship, the prospects of much of the same as 3rd Mate in the West African Trade had little appeal. I wished to broaden my horizons, so when my indentures ran out on 17th March 1966 I chose to look elsewhere. Other companies seemed very keen to employ ex Elder Dempster trained officers.

01.002a	Q: What caused you choose to work for EDs? ---/--- Did you have any previous knowledge of the sea? ---/--- Had you experience of working with other shipping companies?
	<p>Before joining EDs I'd spent the previous 5 years at the London Nautical School and so was taught navigation and seamanship. I even sailed on the Norwegian square rigger the 'Sorlandet'. At age 16. we slept in hammocks & worked aloft without any safety lines.--/-- It was the Head of Navigation, Capt. Harvey that pointed me in the direction of EDs. --/--. H'd previously been with EDs sister company Blue Funnel and so was aware that EDs provided the best training option.--/-- I suppose my first experience of working with another company was my secondment to Paddy Henderson's and the Burma run.</p>
01.002b	Q: Tell me about your pay conditions, ---/--- such as rates of pay, hours of work, overtime and leave arrangements?
	<p>As indentured apprentices we were worked hard for little pay. In fact out of my first month's payment of £15-00, £12-00 went to pay for my correspondence course. We did a minimum of 8 hours, but this could be more if doing a full day's work on deck and then standing a 4 hour bridge watch. In port you could find yourself working a 12 hour day or night shift.</p> <p>Leave for apprentices was kept at 4 days per month,--/-- this was so to enable us to accumulate our qualifying sea time within our contracted apprenticeship. It was usually taken in the UK at the end of each voyage, well within the time it took to discharge and reload the ship for the next voyage.</p> <p>Rates of Pay were for the 1st Year £186 that is £15 per month. For the 2nd Year £222, the 3rd Year £288 and finally £336 in the final year.</p>
01.002c	Q: Tell me about any pension scheme, and other benefits?
	<p>For apprentices there was no company pension scheme as such, or any other benefits. Like most Deck Officers we were encouraged to enrol with the 'Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund'</p>
01.002d	Q: How did the pay and conditions in EDs compare with other shipping companies?
	<p>Non-indentured apprentices that were signed on as Cadets on 'B' articles of engagement could earn overtime and so could financially be better off --/-- In EDs we were indentured to the ship's master. In fact the conditions and wording of the indentures were identical to those approved by the Board of Trade some 50 years</p>

earlier. --/-- It was generally held that contractual conditions in EDs were good. However life was easier for Deck Officers employed by companies with less arduous trades than that found on the West African run. Possibly this is why so many of EDs apprentices left the company after completing their indentured service.

01.002e Q: Did you have much direct contact with EDs management? ---/--- What were relations with EDs management like?.

For apprentices, we had very little contact with EDs management. We had our own training manager, a Captain John Smallwood RN retired. He resided with his wife and daughter in a flat at ED company hostel, 'River House'. Consequently as our direct boss he did have direct hands-on contact with us. I was aware that company director Julian Holt had an interest in our training.

The only other real contact I recall was during the pre-sailing inspections when the Marine and Engineering superintendents would scrutinise the ships.

01.003	Q: How did you learn your job? ---/--- What training was available?
	<p>With regard to Deck Apprentices, Elder Dempster's had a preference for employing candidates that had been at a pre-sea school, where they would have received a minimum level of training in Seamanship and Navigation. They would also have been familiarised in the wearing of uniform and the disciplines of having to work as part of a team.--/-- Those without this background would be sent on the marine orientated 'Outward Bound' Course at Aberdovey before they joined their first ship.</p> <p>By 1963 EDs had a fairly structured formula for training their deck apprentices combining both hands on practical experience, with an increasing period ashore at college for study towards taking the Dept of Transport 2nd Mates exams. We would also spend time in the company's rigging loft splicing wire rope, attending the Lifeboatman's and Efficient Deck Hand Certificate courses as well as the Radar Operators Course.</p> <p>Initially an apprentice would spend several voyages in the company of a senior cadet, so that you he would become fully familiarised with the routine and operation of the ship including the working of the cargo. He would then obtain his Lifeboatman's Certificate and his EDH (Efficient Deck Hand Certificate) essential before he could become a crew member on the training ship the 'Fourah Bay'. The next stage was to spend 3 months ashore in the Company's Hostel 'River House' whilst attending Part 1 of the MAR -'Mid-apprenticeship Release Course' at the Riversdale Technical College. The company held the belief that none of their officers should expect to ask any of the crew to undertake a task that they could not undertake themselves. Consequently the next training phase involved joining the 'Fourah Bay' for 3 voyages to physically experience the duties and skills of an able seaman. 18 cadets replaced the normal deck crew under the instruction of a seasoned Bosun. It was then back to Liverpool for Part 2 of the MAR course before returning to the normal fleet as a senior apprentice..</p> <p>During this last phase you could be promoted to Cadet Officer, often referred to as 4th. Mate. To enable you to spend more time understudying the other qualified officers as well as taking on more responsibilities. .</p>

01.004	Q: What was the most challenging job you had to do? ---/--- Which period of your office or sea-faring career was that? ---/--- What made it particularly challenging?
	<p>The most challenging and frightful task for me was cleaning the wheelhouse windows on the 'Patani'. Unlike earlier ships with a walkway across the front of the bridge, the Patani wheelhouse windows were flush with the front of the superstructure, with a sheer drop below.--/-- Cleaning the dried salt off the glass could only be effectively cleaned from outside. --/-- there were no hand or foot holds.</p> <p>By tradition we apprentices were required to go to the bridge wing, clamber onto the dodger, then climb outside to face the front of the windows. Our footing consisted of resting one's toes on a window ledge of approximately 40mm wide, and gripping with one hand the top of the bridge front plating. The second apprentice positioned on the monkey island above would then pass down a wet cleaning cloth. Enquiring if there was a safer method (pre-jetwasher days) we were informed that it had always been done that way!</p> <p>Later ships of course, in the interest of health and safety, ships were built with a foot and hand rail, or even a walkway designed for the purpose..</p>

01.005	Q: Please tell me how working for EDs, whether working at sea or working overseas affected your family life?
	<p>As an apprentice with short leave periods, I was still very much locked into still living with my parents in London when on leave.--/-- They eventually got use to my being away for 2 to 3 months at a time as did I.</p> <p>Liverpool started to have an influence on my life, caused not just because of sailings from there, but because of the time spent ashore attending the two Mid-apprenticeship Release Courses in Aigburth. I think that we were only allowed home leave for one weekend a month. In fact my interest in Liverpool became increased when I made the acquaintance of a young lady from Liverpool's Waterloo district. The liaison lasted for several years after I left EDs. Earlier in my apprenticeship I had a brief encounter aboard the 'Shonga' with an American missionary's young daughter, making the journey with her family from Freetown to Fall River in the USA. We later retained contact by letter.</p> <p>While away our only real contact with family and friends was by letter, so it was really important that EDs Head Office Staff, and agents on the coast, were able to ensure that their letters were properly and quickly redirected to the ship despite the complexity of West African arrival & departure schedules. Of course with modern mobile-phones there isn't the same reliance on the physical post.</p>

HB01 General Questions: 'Personal Memories'
(All Seagoing Staff)

01.006	Q: Why did you join the Merchant Navy? Who in your family had gone to sea?
	<p>I did have a Grandfather that was a stoker in the RN during WWI , and a Great-Grandfather that was a ships engineer during the Boar War, --/-- but neither had an influence my going to sea.</p> <p>How I ended up at sea was an accident of fate. While at junior school I showed an interest in astronomy, so upon passing my '11 plus' exam in 1957, my enlightened form mistress thought that I would benefit greatly if I went to a grammar school where they taught Astro-Navigation. --/-- Hence I ended up at The London Nautical School--/- became interested in all things nautical and decided upon a career at sea.</p>

01.007a Q: What was your first voyage like? ---/--- How soon did you settle-in and get your sea legs?

The m/v **Patani** had just come from the dry-dock and was light-ship. She was an unsightly untidy mess; the result of dockyard maintenance and shipyard rubbish. The seagoing crew were yet to join the ship and sign-on. I was greeted by the 2nd.Mate who suggested that if I had any sense I would turn right around and go back down the gangway. The 1st mate was more helpful,--/-- showed me where the officers' saloon was and notified me that we ate at 1800 hrs. He then showed me to the apprentices' 2 berth cabin complete with a 2 berth bunk bed. Unfortunately the shipyard workers who had been re-lagging pipes had chosen to use the apprentices' cabin as the main storage space for all the old & spare (asbestos based?) pipe lagging. Consequently my first job was to move all the rubbish into another cabin so that I had a place to sleep. Possibly the 2nd mates advice had been right?

The next morning I found myself matching up a muddled mass of keys & hatch padlocks. The senior cadet finally arrived in time for the next task which took me by surprise, being a fairly weak and green 16 year old. The Tilbury dockers having finished loading cargo for the day would decline to replace the hatch tarpaulins, so it was beholden on us two young apprentices to drag the heavy tarpaulins to cover all 5 hatches, and even lift the heavy steel locking bars into position before padlocking them.? This we did every evening until we sailed. I can still feel the weight of those heavy locking bars.

Regarding my sea legs these were soon to be tested. The 'Patani' left Tilbury on 15th October 1962 and experienced bad weather, causing her to plough into heavy head seas that crashed over the foc'sle and the foredeck. It was not long before the electrics of the forward navigation steaming light were flooded and failed to operate. The solution was to dig out and light up the emergency oil lamp, and instruct the two deck apprentices to hoist the oil lamp into position: Not an easy task. Whilst there was a 'gallows' for the purpose it needed one person to heave on the halyard and a second person to step onto the vertical steel mast ladder, place their shoulder under the lamp then climb and push their way up to the gallows at the top of the mast. It seemed that the oil lamp extinguished itself about every few hours in these extreme conditions so needing the operation to be repeated by the senior apprentice and myself a 16 year old 1st tripper during their first week at sea.

01.007aa Can you think of anything else of interest from your first voyage?

The end of my first voyage (Jan 1963) coincided with the coldest weather in 200 years To summarise the ship very nearly became ice bound in Dunkirk. In fact the lock froze-up 1 hr after we cleared it bound for Amsterdam. We were actually forced to sail without a working gyro compass and the periscope on the magnetic steering compass frozen up. A frozen me complete with duffle coat was sent up to the monkey island. With an ear close to the voice pipe I received the headings to steer from the Pilot.--/-- I would then shout back down the voice pipe, the appropriate helm orders to the helmsman below We sailed out of Dunkirk like this to a safe anchorage so we could effect repairs.

On arrival at Amsterdam the ice alongside the berth was so thick that we could not dock. The ice was removed by fitting demolition balls to the dockside cranes and dropping them onto the ice. The broken ice was then blasted away using the propeller wash from a harbour tug.

01.007b	Q: What was life on board generally like on your further voyages?
	<p>Once I got over the shock of the first voyage, and the rapid transition from innocent youth to a seasoned crew member, life became more bearable though still tough. As I became more acquainted with the jobs, so I was able to prove my worth. Respect from the other officers and crew improved and I found myself being given more responsible tasks.</p>

01.008a	Q: How much autonomy did the <u>crew</u> of your ship(s) have? ---/--- As an <u>officer</u> how much autonomy did you have in your own job?
	<p>Generally speaking the crew on cargo ships had very little autonomy in terms of freedom and how they went about their tasks: There was work to be done often dictated by the voyage sailing schedules and the variable demands of working cargo in port. The crew rarely worked alone; for the most part they worked as a team whether rigging derricks or painting over side the side of the ship.</p> <p>As an apprentice there was little autonomy until you had earned the respect and trust of the Chief Officer , I recall on my first voyage that the senior cadet fell asleep in the hold while sat tallying cargo. We were both then jointly punished by engaging us in extended cargo watching long into the night, thus depriving us of sleep. In contrast during my second voyage I naively asked the Chief Officer why we didn't have a proper signal mast as on the passenger/mail ships. This would solve the problem of the flags rubbing against the grease laden topping lifts on the derricks. Upon our arrival in Abidjan (?) we discovered some 'abandoned' builders scaffolding poles and decided to acquire them on permanent loan. Shortly thereafter we constructed our own customised signal mast and ceased to use the topmast yard halyards. No more grease laden flags!. This temporary signal mast remained in use until the company replaced it with one a was purpose built structure. They also removed the main topmast in total along with the triatic stay. This innovation was later adopted by the remainder of the ED fleet from 1964 as is evident from later photos of the ships.</p> <p>As a qualified officer you would have individual responsibilities for certain tasks, maintenance, distribution of cargo in the holds, navigation passage planning, chart correcting, maintenance of safety equipment etc in addition to keeping a navigation or cargo watch. There could be some flexibility in ensuring that these individual tasks were completed providing all company standing orders were complied with.--/-- Doing one's job well is not an option at sea, but a necessity. I remember one particular incident regarding a Polish Elder Dempster master that had little time for one of his officers. We were in the wheelhouse: '<u>Mister</u> New' he said ' Please go and find the 2nd Mate and ask him to come to the bridge'. I responded by saying: 'I think <u>Mister</u> So&so is in his cabin, I'll get him'. --/-- The captain roared: 'When I address you as <u>Mister</u> New it is out of respect. That man does not have my respect – you will please now find the 2nd mate!</p>

01.008b	Q: How did this compare with other lines you might have worked for?
	<p>Later when I left ED's and sailed with other shipping companies I found that the working practices could be quite different. It seemed that autonomy was very much linked to the rigors and demands of the trade in which the company was engaged.</p> <p>When I was with Strick Line as 3rd mate I found that I had quite a lot of autonomy when it came to working with the cargo. My EDs experience in working logs stood me well when we came to unloading large steel pipes into barges using local Arab labour that had never worked a ship before. I was able to educate both the chief officer and 2nd mate in the art of parbuckling using blocks and bull wires. The two apprentices shared in the experience.</p> <p>While on the same ship the steamship Nigaristan we became involved in an engine room fire on board our own ship, the rescue of the crew of another ship that was on fire, and finally we rescued of the crew of a tanker, putting out their fire for them, then took the ship in tow. Yes we did have autonomy, better described as initiative.</p> <p>.</p> <p>When with the United Baltic Corporation as 3rd Mate, we had a Master that had lost the respect of the crew and us officers because of his drinking habits. I remember berthing in a small port in Finland when the master took the pilot into the chartroom during the final approach to the berth. Despite my calling for his return to the wheelhouse, it became necessary for me to assume control and finish berthing the ship. On a later occasion in Helsinki (?)the British deck crew failed to return from a run ashore when shore leave expired. Luckily we had only been working one hatch, however it became necessary for the three deck officers to secure the hatch and lower the derricks ready for sea. The master refused to take disciplinary action which resulted in the three officer threatening to go on strike unless the offending seamen were 'Logged'. The crew realised that they had overstepped the mark and respect for us officers was restored.</p> <p>When sailing as 2nd Mate on a new Cunard Brocklebank bulk carrier with major construction problems, a broken gyro compass and wonky magnetic compass we sailed between Iceland and Australia via India with the Suez Canal closed. The master and the apprentice promoted to 3rd mate, could not be relied upon. It therefore became necessary for the Chief Officer and myself to join forces to keep the ship running.</p> <p>There were of course companies like Blue Funnel that had their own view of autonomy. I am told that their deck officers were not allowed to write up the Bridge navigation log, They had to write their entries on a slate, that would then be copied into the log by the chief officer.</p> <p>Best of all was the advice given to me by the marine superintendent of Ben Line: 'Mr. New when you join Ben Line you don't have a private life. You marry the Company!' My response was to resign on the spot'. Ben Line, a Scottish company only had 3 English deck officers at the time.</p>

01.008c	Q: What interests, pastimes or activities did you follow when you were not working, that is either on board ship or ashore?
	<p>When I joined my first ship, the 'Patani', I discovered an abandoned Enterprise sailing dinghy on the boat deck. After repairing the rigging and modifying an old lifeboat jib it was put in a sailable condition. I remember sailing it in the barracuda infested water of Takoradi Bay, also the waters off Victoria. Sadly it suffered damage when temporarily landed on an eye bolt on the main deck. The chippy on the Patani taught me the art of putting 'Ships in Bottles'.</p> <p>Reading filled many hours with books from the ships library provided by the Marine Society library and education service. Before the days of video tape, the company hired a 16mm film projector and a selection of feature films for each voyage. The crew would gather normally once a week for a film show. In port with other ED ships we would borrow each others films. Listening to the BBC Radio World Service played a major role in our lives and individuals would carry their own radios to sea. These radios need good aerials for good reception. The rigging of individual aerials was very competitive. I remember that on the Shonga we had played table-tennis. She carried up to 12 passengers, so it's possible that the table was provided for them. The Aureol of course had a swimming pool for the passengers. We were only allowed to use it while the passengers were at lunch or after 10pm at night.</p> <p>Regarding entertainment ashore on the West African Coast this was mainly limited to a visit to the Missions to Seamen before a run ashore to a bar and the delights of a local band playing Hi-Life music. In the case of the 'Fourah Bay' we had the opportunity to get together a Rugby, Football or Cricket team mainly at the invitation of the local 'European Club'. I do however remember playing football against native team in Cameroun.</p> <p>Whilst attending the Mid-apprenticeship Release Course in Liverpool. I played tennis using the hostels own facilities. Night life in Liverpool was buzzing in the early 1960's, we would visit the 'Iron Door Club' and other dance clubs such as the 'Mardi Gras'.</p> <p>As part of the MAR course we would go dinghy sailing at Hoylake, However I would also borrow a college 'Hilbre' to take my girlfriend sailing.</p> <p>Five of us took the challenge of climbing Mt. Snowden on an un-forecasted ice & snow covered weekend. I had always wanted to learn to fence, so I took fencing lessons from a Professor Wladimir Zaaloff at the Zaaloff Fencing Academy. The Professor was a 'White Russian' and former Russian Diplomat who also coached the Liverpool University Fencing Team.</p> <p>I also played the trumpet and violin. Both which sometimes accompanied me on voyages to West Africa.</p>

01.008d	Q: How did you find that relationships between different nationalities were like?
	<p>Shipboard working relations on ED ships between different nationalities were good. I didn't experience any conflict or discrimination. The deck officers in particular would speak 'Pidgen English' which may appear to some as mocking the Kroo Boys or West African less educated shore labour. To those involved in the trade on the 'Coast' would appreciate that it was the working language of many of the West Africans with which we worked. I am given to believe that even the Senior Clergy in Lagos would give some of their sermons in 'Pidgen'.</p> <p>The worst relationships that I witnessed were in the Portuguese Angolan port of Luanda. Black people were not allowed to drive or operate vehicles or mechanical equipment. I believe that the White cargo winch drivers were in fact convicts from the local jail. When I visited there in 1963, my fellow officers informed me that the Black dockers' overseers, in the recent past used long canes or whips on their charges. I witnessed for myself the armed police/ military patrolling the streets in Land-Rover style vehicles looking for Black civilians caught out on the streets after the 8pm (?) Black curfew. I later met someone that had been given a lift in one of these vehicles and witnessed the shooting of a Black individual. Strangely the same discriminating rules didn't seem to apply in the Angolan port of Lobito.</p>

HB01 General Questions: 'Personal Memories'
(British & European Seafarers)

01.009e	Q: How much did you know about West Africa when you started?
	<p>When I started with ED's I knew almost nothing of the West African Coast. I knew that it had a previous reputation as the 'White Man's Graveyard' that was all. My interest at the time was in obtaining an apprenticeship with a company with a good marine reputation.</p>

01.009f	Q: What were your first impressions like, and did those impressions change as you saw more of West Africa?
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Visiting West Africa for the first time I didn't really have anything to compare with. Having been brought up in a big city like London, I suppose my main impression was that I had travelled back in time to the undeveloped past and the dying embers of the British Empire. I left EDs and the Coast before the 'Biafra War'. Independence had happened but development and social change was still slow, so not much had caused me to change my original impression. I still went away with images of berthing at Bathurst and working sweaty fly infested nights with the heavy clonks of giant Rhino Beetles crashing into the poorly lit ship's masts. Yes, a far cry from the now popular holiday resort frequented by tourists from Northern Europe.

01.009g

Q: Which was your favourite West African country and why?

My limited years on the West African coast make it hard for me to favour one country more than another. So much happened there after I left ED's in 1966. When I visited Luanda in Angola I was knocked out by this sophisticated city with its smart shops, car showrooms and cinema. It was a true oasis and a true product of Portuguese influence. Unfortunately it still echoed old practices reminiscent of the days of Portuguese slavery.

I suppose of all that sticks in my mind were the trips into the Nigerian creeks. A peak into our colonial explorers past.

HB01 General Questions: 'Personal Memories'
(All Seagoing Staff)

01.010a	Q: Did you experience West Africa both under colonial rule and following independence? ---/--What changes appeared to make the greatest differences to the job?
	I joined ED's in 1962 shortly after Independence, and left in 1966. My own limited view was that during this period change was slow with little influence on the practical operation of the ships on the Coast. Men were still humping & running with hessian bags of groundnuts on their backs. The creek pilots still came out in wooden dugout canoes. The Kroo Boys still daubed boiling hot wax onto the sides of the deep tanks whilst precariously perched on rope slung staging without any protective clothing. We still worked logs as they had done 30years or more before.
01.010b	Q: Did you experience many social changes?
	Aboard the ship I wasn't really aware of any social changes.
01.010c	Q: Do you think the end of empire changed things significantly?
	With regards to the West African Coast I didn't notice any significant changes while I was there.--/-- I however served the last voyage of my apprenticeship with Paddy Henderson's on the Burma run. Even during my single voyage I witnessed the influence that the Dictator, General Ne Win had upon the Burmese economy, right down to the drug regime controlling the selection of the ships crews. The Burma trade had diminished so much, that with a failing currency, EDs & Paddy's management were considering winding up the service.
01.011a	Q: How did the cargoes that were carried on your ED voyages compare with the types of cargoes carried with other lines you worked for?
	The cargoes carried on ED ships outward to the Coast were much the same as carried by the ships of other companies. Homeward was a different matter we loaded large logs straight out of the waters of the creeks, carrying them both in the holds and as a deck cargo. We also carried bulk liquid Latex, Palm Oil and Groundnut Oil in large deep tanks that need special and meticulous preparation. We would take on additional native Kroo Boy labour at Freetown to help prepare the tanks.

01.011b	Q: Were some cargoes (outward or homeward) more problematic than others? ---/--- How did you cope with the difficult cargoes?
	<p>Bulk Liquid cargoes such as Latex, Palm Oil and Groundnut Oil were carried in large deep tanks that need special and meticulous preparation. We would take on additional native Kroo Boy labour at Freetown to help prepare the tanks.</p> <p>We also carried Black & Crepe Rubber Bales, dusted with talcum powder which had to be kept dry. These could only be stowed six high otherwise they would become crushed. Cotton and hessian bagged Ground nuts equality had their own stowage requirements</p> <p>Having loaded the cargo, hold ventilation was a prime concern, If the temperature and humidity was wrong, condensation would form on the exposed cargo damaging it. Hatch and outside air & sea temperatures would be regularly monitored and the flow of air to the holds regulated. The method of achieving this differed greatly between the older ships with wooden hatches and old fashioned ventilators and the newer ships with steel hatched and ventilation and extractor fans set into to bipod masts.</p>
01.011c	Q: How did things change with containerisation? ---/--- Did you experience these changes?
	<p>The only containers that I witnessed during my time with EDs were small and only 8ft square. They weren't that successful as the nature of the homeward cargoes carried at the time couldn't guarantee the right type of cargo to fill them for the homeward voyage. I believe that some containers found their way ashore as living accommodation for some of the natives. EDs did try Palletised Cargoes, fine outward bound but again the wooden pallets and racking didn't at the time suit the homeward bound cargoes. My comments of course refer to the mid 1960's.</p> <p>.</p>
01.012a	Q: Did you ever visit continental <u>European</u> ports? ---/--- How did these compare with UK and West African ports? ---/--- What were your experiences like there?
	<p>The European ports before containerisation were much the same as the UK except that because of the language barriers we relied heavily upon support from the local agency staff. I do remember that in Bordeaux the dockers were smoking in a hold full of hessian bagged ground nuts creating a fire risk. I repeatedly shouted down to them in French to stop smoking and pointed to the 'no smoking' signage. They deliberately turned their backs on me. When I swore at them in English and suggested that perhaps they would prefer me to address them in German they responded and extinguished their cigarettes. Bordeaux had of course been Vichy during the war only 8 years before.</p> <p>EDs and the continent brings back memories of the Fourah Bay. She regularly visited Hamburg and was a good run ashore for us lads from the training ship. We used to call in at the 'Zillertal' a famous Bavarian style beer hall, then on to the Star Club made famous by the Beatles. We had free admission to another club which had a reciprocal arrangement with the 'Iron Door Club' in Liverpool frequented by us when on the MAR Courses.</p>

01.012b	Q: Did you ever visit <u>North American & Canadian</u> ports? ---/--- How did these compare with UK and West African ports? ---/--- What were your experiences like there?
	<p>My third voyage with EDs was on the Shonga. We visited the States and Canada after first visiting West Africa. Our first port of call in the States was Fall River in Massachusetts where we discharged a bulk cargo of liquid latex bound for the Firestone tyre factory. So valuable was this cargo that the freight charges would pay the costs of the whole voyage back to West Africa and the UK. We also called at Boston & Philadelphia before calling in at New York. In a dusty little music shop I bought an old second hand trumpet and music tutor.</p> <p>The dockers in Philadelphia became very upset when the senior cadet accidentally allowed the American courtesy ensign to touch the deck when un-attaching the flag halyard. Despite an apology they went on strike for a day. Our next call was at Brooklyn, where I was given time off to cross over to take a look at New York .Visiting Broadway. I took the opportunity of taking in a play called ‘Tovarich’ starring Vivien Leigh in the lead.--/-- I remember wearing my uniform ashore.</p> <p>Our visit to Canada was far from welcoming. We called at Montreal where we berthed opposite the construction site for the forthcoming WORLD EXPO exhibition. We were greeted next morning by the police warning us of a bomb threat. This was treated seriously as someone had painted FLQ in very large letters on the seaward side of the ship. The dockers naturally declined to work the ship until the police had given the all-clear. FLQ stood for ‘Freedom – Liberte – Quebec’, the signature for a French speaking independence campaign motivated by a recent speech by President De Gaul. The group had been bombing selected targets in Montreal using explosives stolen from the nearby construction site. We searched the ship but found nothing.</p>

01.012c	Q: Did you ever visit the <u>Canaries</u>? ---/--- How did these compare with UK and West African ports? ---/--- What were your experiences like there?
	<p>The cargo ships would generally call in at the Canaries for Bunkers during the homeward passage. I remember visiting Las Palmas more than the other ports. The reason for bunkering on the homeward passage was that it enabled vessels visiting the shallow creeks to maximize the loading capacity for cargo whilst maintaining a shallow draft. This was not a consideration for the passenger vessels like the Aureol on which we would call in at Las Palmas on the Outward voyage. Local dance troops would visit the ship to entertain the passengers with a display of Spanish dancing. For the crews there were opportunities for buying duty free goods from the traders that visited the ship.</p>

HB01 General Questions: ‘Personal Memories’
(Wives of EDL Staff)

01.016a	Q: What was the life of an Elder Dempster wife or fiancé like?
	<p>Elder Dempster apprentices were not allowed to marry without the company’s permission unless they were 21. The same went for the consumption of Spirits</p> <p>I can only speak as someone with a girlfriend back in Liverpool. Ideally they needed commitment to those afloat, and in return trust allowing them to still enjoying a social life with their friends. Most important was letter writing and the ability of EDs to forward the mail to the ship.</p> <p>Company’s views towards support of their officers’ wives and fiancés varied considerably. The worst example was that of Ben Line; Quote by the marine superintendent of Ben Line: ‘Mr. New when you join Ben Line you don’t have a private life. You marry the Company!’</p>

01.016b	Q: Did you ever experience a voyage where wives accompanied their Husband?? How did you find that experience?
	<p>I can’t speak for myself; however I did sail on the ‘Dumbaia’ where the Chief Officer and 2nd Engineer took their wives on a voyage down the Coast. My impression was that they enjoyed each other’s company particularly when shore excursions were arranged for them by the Company’s agents ashore. On the same voyage we crossed the equator, so we had quite an elaborate ceremony mainly for their benefit. The ‘Chippy’ even built a substantial ducking pool.</p> <p>I suspect that life for spouses on long sea passages could be boring particularly as the company’s regulations restricted them from visiting the bridge or engine room whilst at sea. EDs ship were largely uninsured hence the Companies stance on this matter .</p>

HB01 General Questions: ‘Personal Memories’
(All EDL Staff)

01.017a	Q: EDs seemed to have a vibrant social life attached to the company, both at sea and on land – do you have any recollections specifically of that? <i>{See also Question 01.008c for seafarers}</i>
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I think I may have already answered this in an earlier question. I wouldn't necessarily consider that we had a vibrant life because we were with ED's: However I probably most remember attending the Mid-apprenticeship Release Courses in Liverpool, and meeting a young lady at a dance at the Aulis Hostel who later became my girlfriend. Of course there was the Liverpool 'Night Life' which was buzzing in the early 1960's. I remember we and some of the other cadets from River House would visit the 'Iron Door Club' and other dance clubs such as the 'Mardi Gras'.

01.017b	Q: EDs seemed to have a vibrant social life attached to the company in the UK, how did that present itself in contact with the West African Colonial society? Do you have any recollections specifically of that?
	In the case of the 'Fourah Bay' we had the opportunity to get together a Rugby, Football or Cricket team mainly at the invitation of the local 'European Clubs'. Whilst members of the Colonial Society were keen to challenge us at sport, as seamen, being even officers, general invitations were rarely offered. Outsiders were not welcome!
01.018a	Q: How did you feel about the end of Elder Dempster lines in 1989 as a British and Liverpool-based firm?
	Sad, that we lost the trade and our inheritance. EDs means a lot to me. It gave me my start in life; for which I am eternally grateful.
01.018b	Q: How did you feel about the reduction of the size of the British Merchant Navy generally?
	I feel very embittered that our maritime inheritance is now almost totally in the hands of foreign ship owners, with British registered ships manned mainly by foreign officers and crews.
01.019	Q: What is your most abiding memory connected with working for EDs?
	My most abiding memory of EDs was having been bitten by a bug similar to a Mango Fly which deposited its offspring into my left leg. Despite treatment by the Doctor in Sapele I later discovered the larvae had travelled to my opposite leg close to my groin and their tracks were moving upward. Luckily the Chief Officer Ray Donker had a supply of Ethyl Chloride spray with which I successfully froze them to death.
01.020a	Q: How far have you kept in touch with former colleagues?

Having left EDs in 1966 and mainly living in the South I lost contact with my ED colleagues. One exception was a fellow cadet Cecil Thistlethwaite who sailed as master with me on a Supply Ship working in the North Sea. Several years ago the internet led me to contact the Fourah Bay Reunion Association. I also found the EDL Website run by Mike Ingham. Mike sailed as a writer on the Dumbaia when I was a Cadet Officer on the same ship.

01.020b Q: Are you a member of the Elder Dempster Pensioners Association or the Merchant Navy Association? ---/--- If not, why/not?

I belong to neither bcause I have never been invited to join.

01. Q:

My voice be dri, Is it time to close di page?
