

## Cor Blimey – it's London

So there I was, back in San Francisco after conquering the Orient and India. I had made several friends the last time I was in San Francisco so I renewed acquaintances and spent a few more weeks in the city of hills and trolley cars. Then it was time to move on again. I now had my Norwegian Seaman's papers so was eligible to work on any Norwegian ship that needed crew. I went to the shipping office and was surprised to find that a ship was going to London via the Panama Canal. There was one slight problem. It wasn't a Norwegian ship, it was Swedish. Now it was off to the Swedish consulate to apply for my Swedish papers. With this accomplished I was now a member of the Norwegian Merchant Marines and the Swedish Merchant Marines.

The ship was the M.S. Paramatta, 9,700 tons and built in 1944. It was carrying lumber from Eureka, California to England. On the first ship I had worked as a "Maskingutt" (engine boy). On this ship I was promoted to an "Oiler". Now, instead of just cleaning all the spilled oil off the engine I was in charge of oiling the engine. This meant that my pay went from \$40. per month to \$60.00 per month. I was finally making it in the world. I worked from 8:00 a.m. to noon and 8:00 p.m. to midnight.

We sailed down the West coast of America and docked overnight at the entrance to the Panama Canal. A few of us lowered the gangway down to water level and climbed down to the bottom and peered into the water. There were so many fish in the water that you could catch them by grabbing them with your hand. In the morning we headed North-West through the 48 mile long canal. The Panama Canal has 6 locks and we were guided into the locks by "mules" (locomotives). There were 3 mules on each side of the ship and the mules ran on rails. The ship moves under it's own power but the mules all have lines attached to the ship to keep it from banging into the sides.

Eight hours later we had left the Pacific Ocean and I was oiling my way across the Atlantic at 13 knots. When we were half way across the Atlantic the crew decided to go fishing. We needed a fishing pole and line so we used the electric winch and 1" steel cable that is used to lift supplies on board. At the end of the cable we attached a hook that is used to hang beef carcasses in the freezer. We then stuck a steak on the hook and had the winch slowly lower this fishing gear into the ocean. In less than a minute we had a bite. We had the electric winch lift up our catch and found a 6' long shark on the end of the line. Construction type fishing on the ocean.

We arrived in London at the beginning of August. I immediately fell in love with the city and took up residence there for the next 6 months. There was so much to do. Places to go, people to meet, plays to see, pubs to visit, girls to.....ah. That's another story.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leadley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Brad McInnes**  
**YMASC President 1970 - 1971**

