

## Colourful Characters

Bill Gould (Vindi 1939)



**I was born on the 6th July 1922** and lived the first eighteen months in Cambridge. At that time my father died from the effects of the first world war. Possibly he was poisoned from a ‘mustard gas’ attack. My Mother then had to return back to work as a floor manageress at the Regents Palace Hotel in London. I believe that although my maternal Grandfather did help out with some financial aid on occasions, much against the wishes of my maternal Grandmother, I was ‘farmed’ out, (1924 terminology for foster parents) for about 3 years. At that time my Mother visited and found me on the floor helping the pet Pekinese dogs eat their food from their food bowl. Mum was not impressed although neither I, nor the dogs, seemed to mind.

I was then taken away and Mum put me in a Church of England Convent in London, and that made me somewhat insular. I was handed over to a woman in horrible black garments, with a white face, into a place where there was no light, other than fire light, and left me there for 2 years with the nuns. I did get my own back in the end when I caught measles and they had to shut the whole place down for 6 weeks. This traumatic experience made me even more self-dependent on myself - all alone.

The convent had been situated at the Hammersmith Embankment, opposite what I think was the Stork Training Ship. I remember being in the convent when the 1926 general strike was on and Mum used to visit on a Saturday afternoon when she had a couple of hours off work. When she didn't come, the nuns said “that she couldn't help it”. To me it was something I could not understand.

My Mother took me away from the convent after about 2 years and took me to Ireland, to County Wicklow, when she remarried. There was good and not so good in this situation. The not so good was the fact that I didn't get on real well with my step-father, although looking back I don't think he was all that tough on me really. The good part was that I now had a ‘brother’. Geoff was two years older than me, and we got on real well together. This was at the time that the Irish people called ‘The Troubles’ when the Southern Ireland population rebelled against the English. Once the revolt was over, and Southern Ireland seceded from the English rule, it didn't make it easy for me, as I was the only English lad in the entire school. After the fighting slowed down and school restarted, on my first day, I had to endure three fights, which I'm glad to say, I won and was left in relative peace thereafter at school. Unfortunately our home was on the other side of the catholic areas and many times, Geoff and I, had to stand back to back to fight them off to be able to get home. (What GOOD OLD Days?) I never got any sisters though.

Three years later I remember returning to England and seeing leg-less soldiers in Ilford, with their medals on, pushing themselves around on small wheeled trolleys and playing tin whistles to make a few bob. It was a terrible sight to see. Those Men had given so much to their Country and were then treated like lepers. Given no help at all.

At that time, my parents took over a small shop in Ilford, a sort of General Store type shop, and while they were trying to get it all organized and up and running, I was sent off to my Grand fathers place in Norwich at the Mortimer's Pub/Hotel, for three months. Mum and Dads shop didn't seem to go real well and they left Ilford to take on a pub at Welwyn, which should have gone really well, but Dad was not a good manager. He would disappear in to the ‘private bar’ and chat with the local gentry and leave his customers in the ‘public bar’ hanging. To tell you there were another ten pubs in the village tells you the whole story.

After leaving school. I took a job with North Met Power Company and also a 3 year correspondence course as an Electrical Engineer. I also joined the Air Defence Cadet Corp. and when a course became available to learn to fly gliders, I jumped at it and signed up. These craft were known as Daglands, not gliders, and you had to try to keep the speed up as in free fall they descended at 33feet per second. That

sort of speed made for a very uncomfortable and stressful landing. At the end of the course, providing you landed your aircraft in one piece, you received an "A" license for the Air force.

When the dark clouds of WW11 was upon us and knowing no armed service would have me due to an eye damaged at birth, I decided to go to sea as a Merchant Seaman, even if I had to go in catering, which I did by going to the Vindicatrix Sea School in 1939.

One thing I remember about the Vindicatrix was the fact that it was so cold most of the time. There was no heating at all. We used to do our physical training every second morning down on the "all up" deck (Orlop) and then we would come up and get a bowl of water to wash all over. It was not very pleasant but we got through it. I joined the Vindicatrix in the catering department because I was crook in the right eye and I could not pass the eye sight test for any of the armed forces, so I got in there. Of course it was early October in 1939, everyone had just gone to war and everybody got themselves excited. I had been knocked back from the air force and one thing and another so I went into the merchant navy, I wanted to go to sea anyway.

We were always very hungry, the food was that bad. I think we had a dole payment or something when we joined and then we all were allowed sixpence a week out of that to buy everything. Two pence, I think, it cost to go to the pictures, on a Saturday afternoon. If we were allowed the watch off.

One Saturday afternoon one of the boys came in with a box of kippers and we all sat down and chewed on these kippers. They weren't that nice, raw, but smoked of course, and we were very happy, but that night we all got mustered up on the upper deck and we had to stand there in our undies or whatever we were in, until somebody admitted they had stolen this box of kippers, unfortunately it was from the car of the chief of police of Bristol. So he got dismissed pretty sharp, but I did enjoy those raw kippers!

I don't remember too much about the Vindicatrix, as she was then still called The Gravesend Sea School, but I always remember seeing the Severn bore coming up the river and of course having to go all the way down to the wharf to use the toilet block. Another thing I always remember at the Vindicatrix was the margarine they used. They'd give us a bit of margarine, a couple of doorsteps of bread and were told don't complain, "When you get to sea you will get butter" We did too, it was that Irish butter, the stuff in tins and in the tropics it went off and smelt like someone had vomited in the scuppers!

The first part of the time I was there the vicar's yard fortunately had some apples in it so we had to stand a few lectures about stealing apples and one thing or another, which of course we always did. Anyway I passed my examinations with my mate, there were only six of us in our intake for that week in early October, four of them were the deck crowd and two of us in catering. Anyway we both passed and of course we had to wait for the mandatory 10 or 11 weeks. You had to stay there whether you had passed your exams or not and of course that is how they usually got the cheap labour in the galley or the captain's tiger. Nathan and I went to Captain Duguid and we managed to convince the captain that we should have Christmas leave. He was horrified and said, "You don't get any leave here" so I said " Sir, we are soon going away and as there is a war now, we might be away six or eight months, can't we go home, we are only sitting here?" So we got home for Christmas and had some time there. Mind you, we had to pay our own train fares, both ways. It was worth it though just for the great meals we had at home.

We got back to the ship just after Boxing Day and we were due to go then so we were hanging around outside the poop waiting for the phone to ring this night and at eight o'clock it rang. We were called in and were told they wanted a cabin boy for the Sultan Star, a Blue Star boat, well I don't know about my mate but I immediately saw visions of Carmen Miranda and Christ knows what else. He asked us who wants it, we both said we wanted it, we both wanted to get away. He said, "well there is only one way, toss a coin", so he tossed the coin and my mate won. I was very disappointed.

Anyway he went away that night. The next morning I was called up and shipped out to Cardiff to join another ship, the Salters Gate, but later on I found out I was pretty lucky. I must have been lucky all during the war because my mate went on the Sultan Star and she was sunk; torpedoed or raider, I thought he got lost with it but apparently there was only one casualty, I found out later from the Tower memorial on Tower Hill but ever after that I thought I was lucky, I went right through the war and I never got sunk. I hit a mine and I got bombed and Christ knows what else but the ship never sank. So I must have done something for the devil not to want me, but that was the way.

On board the 'Gate' boat we had white officers and deck crew and catering crew, but greasers and oilers

were Malays, Indians etc: We had a real Gunnery Officer in charge of the gun crew. The gun was a 4" gun on the poop deck. The gun crew was the Cabin boy, Mess Boy, Galley Boy and the Apprentice. The Cook and Chief Steward were the loaders. Lord only knows, if we had had any serious fighting to do because the Cook, without his glasses was blinder than any bat. His lenses were about an inch thick. The Chief Steward didn't wear glasses. That doesn't mean that he didn't need them, as watching him slicing a roast we were all wondering when he was going to slice his own nose, it was that close to the knife.

For general information, in those days the gun was always mounted on the poop in compliance with some international agreement that merchant ships could only carry guns for defensive use as they could not traverse, but were fixed in firing aft only. The ship had to therefore be running away before it could even get a shot in. Flat out at 8 knots, she wouldn't be able to run far before an enemy raider would catch up enough to be in range for its own guns but still out of range for the cargo boats gun. Another point on the legal aspects of Law in those days, was, if a merchant ship had a gun on her foc'sle she would be refused entry into any foreign port.

One of our first jobs was to have some practice gunnery. I was the gun layer, aimer to those that don't know. I was told to aim at a ships funnel two columns away. Having done so, the Gunner himself came to check it and nearly blew a fuse. Yelling that I couldn't have hit anything as I had laid it up wrong. I argued that it was correct and he then decided to have the twin telescopes re calibrated and re-aligned it was then found that the scopes were not in sync. I'm still waiting for an apology from 'Guns'.

At the end of our trip, I was allotted to another ship, the 'Vernon City'. As I went to join her, I decided that I was going to be a Deck Boy this time, so, being wartime, I claimed my last trip had taken me on as Galley boy because no-one else had been available but that I had trained as a deck boy. Explanation accepted and from then on I was part of the deck crew of any ship I joined. (What bad EYE?)

On one of our trips on the 'Vernon', we heard about the fall of France. A little while later, we heard about the Germans using paratroops to drop behind our lines and creating enough havoc to be able to win battles and occupy more territory. Our Officers and Engineers decided that if we were going back to England, with the chance to be captured by paratroopers, we should have some sort of weapons to at least try to resist them. So, when we were at anchor at San Pedro, late at night a small boat approaches our ship and it had a number of rifles and handguns that the Officers and Engineers had ordered. After leaving port, the captain called the hands on deck and each one was given a handgun and was shown how to fire the beast. Three bullets each and that was all the practice we got.

There was much chatter about going back to England if it was in German hands. A mutiny was planned that the crew would take over the ship and sail it to Canada. However there was never any confirmation that Hitler had landed in the UK. However, when we reached England at Liverpool, the Customs came aboard and very soon had all the firearms, which they confiscated and handed them to the Home Guard. So much for our safety.

My next ship was the "Duchess of Bedford". She had been converted in to a troop ship with amenities for nearly 3000 soldiers. The first trip, we loaded a full armored division complete with tanks, armoured troop carriers and ammunitions for the tanks when they went ashore. We carried the Troops, their tanks and their armoured troop carriers. Two other ships in this fast convoy were the Denbyshire and the Waiwera. She belonged to the New Zealand Shipping Company, based in London in those days. The tanks were the Matildas and they only had a 2lb gun to fight with. They did have good armor, but with such a light gun they had to get within 700 yards to be able to puncture the German tanks. As they could travel at only about 15 mph, they were almost sitting ducks for the Sherman tanks and the 88mm anti-tank guns of the Germans. This trip we were going to somewhere in Egypt, although we did not know that until we rounded the Cape of Good Hope. A place called Abbeville, I think. The next trip was back there again, with reloads of just about everything for the troops.

A couple of years later, whilst at sea heading for French North Africa, it was noticed that there was smoke coming out of the top of one of the Samson posts. Because of our cargo, we were ordered out and away from the convoy. The captain wanted to abandon ship, but the Chief Mate thought we could handle this problem and save the ship. We opened the hatch and went down to the lower hold wearing our 'smoke helmets, which just happened to be near useless. Down there, there was an area that was boarded off with shifting boards. We had to climb over and under and around the cargo of new "Churchill" tanks with their brand new 6lb'er guns. It was tough, but we did manage to douse the fires, mainly with steam apparatus.

However, a cargo of Guinness had been boiled and had to be dumped. Fortunately, another part of the cargo was French Brandy, which was undamaged. I managed to purloin three bottles of the same and stuffed them down my shirt. Then I noticed the Chief coming down to inspect the damage and I slipped behind a tank and was readjusting the tanks ties. Next moment, the Mates hand came over my shoulder and his voice came in my ear, and he said, here you go Billy, a nice bottle of Brandy for doing such a grand job, the Government thanks you. I couldn't stand up, or the bottles in me shirt would have clanked together, so I just took the offered bottle and said 'Thanks Chief' this will go down very well'

Much of the ammo on board the tanks, shells etc: had to be disposed of because of them being too hot, boy, did we move fast in getting rid of that lot? When landing the tanks at the berth, we had to cover the top of the tanks with tarps etc to disguise the fact that they carried a much bigger gun. Of course, by the time they were all offloaded, the whole of Africa knew about them. On another trip, we had 1800 soldiers on board, taking them to their battle. We were the lead ship on this occasion and therefore had the Para vanes rigged and out.

This was also my 21st birthday. I was the standby on the 4-8 watch and had gone to call the 2nd mate. He had a half bottle of Rum, and I had just about conned a drink from him, for my 21st of course, when there was a great Bang from outside. We all rushed out on deck to have a look at the remains of the Starboard Para Vane. It had snagged a mine, and instead of directing it away from the ship it had given it a nice hard cuddle and the damned thing blew-up. The deck crew was all up and about by then, as were the 1800 soldiers, many who had been on the foc'le, and even a couple who had nearly been washed overboard by the wave that the mine had created and dumped on the fore deck. We had a spare Para vane and it was eventually rigged and put in place, despite the help the soldiers insisted on giving us. They were of course, more of a hindrance than a help, but they did try I guess.

The fun wasn't quite over yet though as next morning we appeared to be going much slower than our proper 18 knots and the boat seemed to want to go away to starboard. Believe it or not, we had hooked another mine on the paravane cable. It was decided that we would lower a derrick out to the cable and put our cargo runner under the cable, then by lifting the derrick we should be able to lift the mine high enough to be able to cut the cable. No such luck, lifting as high as the derrick would the mine was only just clear of the water. In fact when the ship rolled, it dipped into the ocean and was moved away aft. Getting closer to the ship as it went, gentle roll back and it moved back near to bow. The soldiers mean time, were all clustered down at the poop, hoping to be out of harms way. It was decided that the only way to get rid of this beast was to shoot the cable and that way the mine would drift away.

We borrowed Tommy guns from the troops and after about 10,000 shots the mine fell back into the water and drifted away, hopefully to meet with the ship that dropped it off. Early in the war we were still so short of armaments that one of the prize ideas some boof heads put up was what they called the "Holman Protector". It consisted of a steel tube that was mounted on the bridge, or somewhere where you had a clear line of fire. You could not aim it, just point out in the one direction. It was connected to the boiler if you were a steam ship, or if you were a motor ship, to a high-pressure airline. The idea was that you had a hand grenade and you put it in to this tin, which had a lid that you put on and it held the lever down. The idea was that when the plane was coming for you, you were supposed to put this projectile up into the air and it would meet the plane. With the wind whistling through the lid, the lever would go up, the lid would fly open and the grenade would go off and hopefully the plane would be in the same place. There was one small problem with this, for most of the old class ships, the firemen were Arabs and they were not interested one little bit in war at that time. So as soon as the alarm sounded, they would abandon the stoke hole and the steam pressure would drop down. This would allow the ship to slow down.

I believe that the only couple of times it was used, the grenade finished up on the afterdeck somewhere and gave everyone a dam good fright. That was one of the least brilliant ideas our armament boffins had. It was claimed that the idea was hatched by a totally drunk scientist. Another bright idea was to take all the fins off a Lewis gun and shoot at attacking aircraft using it as a rifle. Well, after the first shot was fired, the kick that the shooter received normally knocked him flat on his back, which meant that there were bullets flying in all directions except where the plane was. It was of course, fired on full automatic. I leave the rest to the readers imagination.

Another memory comes to mind that during 1942 there was a big shortage of men to man the ships that were going overseas for more cargos for Britain. To help out a little, the Royal Navy were training men, up

to the age of about 32-35yrs, possibly on the HMS Majestic and after their training period were hired to the Merchant Navy as JOS or SOS. To indicate the level of training these men had, a good example is as follows. A ship, the Mantella an Australian merchant ship, had to be moved from one dock to the buoys. The ship had only four seamen available for this job so the Pool Office establishment was contacted for some more seamen.

They were sent some men who were 32 years plus, conscripts who had been trained by the Royal Navy for about 6 months. Remember, these men were supposedly trained to SOS levels. So stations were called with two real seamen on the foc'sle and two on the after deck. Each pair were complemented by some of these RN trained personnel. On the foc'sle, the chief officer detailed one of the seamen off to tend the backspring and sent one of the fill-ins to assist. On the way to their station, the fill-in asked in a quiet voice, "What's a backspring". Says a lot for the training eh?. I wonder 'who was on the wheel'? They knew less that a first trip lad straight from the Vindi.

After the war, I was sailing on the good ship 'Roxburgh Castle', a new replacement ship for the Union Castle Co. We had done two trips to South Africa, and the third trip went to Australia. It was there, that two mates and myself decided to skip ship. After an evening ashore we returned to the ship and packed our bags. Then we had to wait until the midshipman at the gangway took a toilet break and we rushed ashore. The midshipman returned in time to see us legging it up the wharf and he called the mate. The mate gave chase, but he had on his slippers and dressing gown and couldn't run as quick as we were going. Just outside the gate was a tram stop and right at that moment a tram came along and we all tossed our bags aboard and clambered on and went off to a new life.

After jumping ship, in August 1945, with my two mates, Dusty (a Scouser and a Kiwi) we had a tarpaulin' muster and found we had £2.3.0 between us. I had £2 and the other two had three bob between them. We made our way to Woolloomooloo and found lodgings for all of us. Next morning we went looking for work. Without any paperwork nor permits it was going to be hard. However, we came across a timber mill that needed workers. The work was hard and heavy, so we sent Kiwi in first to see what the water was like. He got a job on the spot. So me and Dusty went in and were both offered work immediately, permits, what permits? We had to move stacks of timber here and there, and because we didn't have any leather aprons or shoulder pads we found it hard. There was lots of hardwood to move about, and that stuff is heavy. One day, we were moving a 6"x6"x30' long piece of timber. Me on one end and Dusty on the other when the bosses son asked us if we couldn't manage this on our own and we both said no as we have no leather protective coverings. George Hudson, I think his name was, agreed that was tough and asked me if I could do the 'dog mans' job. I said YES I can, and I was set to work on the largest crane in the yard. I also had to work a small crane too when there was no work for the bigger crane.

After about five weeks on this job, the driver of the big crane told me I was the best 'dog' they had had since the start of the war. He also told me how much the other "dogs" got as well. They were being paid more than a quid more than I was getting. Naturally I fronted the boss boy and said that as I was working the biggest crane, I should have a better wage than I was getting and at least as much as the other dog men were getting. I was told that I would get no higher money until I had been working there for a full year. I decided that I would not wait that long, and suggested to Dusty that we move out and see what we could get at the Seaman's Union. He agreed and we left the job that afternoon.

We arrived at the Union (Painters and Dockers) office and Bob Sherlock, Union Delegate said he had been looking for us to help clean ships. In fact there was a job waiting for us on the 'Anotina', clearing phosphate that had been carried on her last trip. It had to be completely eliminated before being handed back to her owners. That evening, at a Union meeting, Bob got us into the Union and we were to start work with him next morning. On arrival at the office, we were told that we had to report to Cockatoo Island for work. So we were being sent to the Naval dockyard for work.

With us being classified as deserters it looked like we would soon be on the way back to the UK as prisoners on a ship. Much to our surprise, we were given a lecture on safety procedures and a medical and were then sent into the drydock to start scraping the bottom of a destroyer. The next ship to come into the dry dock was the Brisbane Star I think. Blue Star Line of course, and it was raining. When we walked into the wharfies changing room, the lads were fitting themselves out with corn sacks to go out in the rain and work. We asked what they were doing and they told us this was what they always did when it was raining. Now Dusty and I had very recently joined the union ranks and of course had read the rules and regulations.

One of the rules stated that Painters and Dockers would not work in the rain unless proper wet weather gear was supplied. So Dusty and I said we would not work unless proper wet weather gear was supplied. This of course started a right royal debate that very soon involved all the dock workers and of course, management. The union reps had their wet weather gear and were ready to go, but after the meeting voted that if we didn't work, without proper gear, no one would work in the rain.

Basically we had caused a stop work meeting and there was almost a strike called, and we had been there just a week. Not bad for a couple of Poms eh? After all this, the management said they would give us some inside work for that day, but if it rained again the next day, we would be expected to work, rain or no. We decided that this was not what we wanted, so finished off there and then and went in search of Bob Sherlock who had again been looking for us as he had some real dirty work for us to do. This also was deep tank cleaning and it had to be completed yesterday. As I remember it, we worked and were paid for a straight 36 hours stint. Of course we had meal breaks and toilet breaks that amounted to possibly 15 hours all up.

We ended up with £28 each for the two days work, that was about half as much again as an AB got for a month. After that I decided to transfer to Melbourne, you could do that in those days, transfer from one branch to another of the union. Dusty said he didn't want to go and would stay in Sydney. So I said my farewells to him and telling him to be careful, after all, we were still deserters, I took off to Melbourne to see what I thought was my girlfriend. I was told when I got back there that "my girlfriend" was actually a married woman and her husband had been a prisoner of the Japs and was on his way back to Australia.

I was still being lucky however because my landlady found out about my 'lost' girl friend and promptly invited me into her bed. Within a couple of weeks, my new girl started being very possessive and stormed into the pub on a Saturday arvo, where I was having a drink with her son, and screaming abuse at me accused me of playing up with another woman. She had come armed with my sheath knife with which she tried to attack me. She ripped her own fur coat as she tried to get the knife out of her coat pocket, then slashed at me with the blade. I managed to block her thrust with my arm, but received a nasty gash anyway. That of course finished that romance. After that, I immediately contacted the Registered General of Seamen and he promptly sent me my discharge papers and I transferred from the Painters and Dockers Union to the Australian Merchant Service Union.

It was a few years later, when my ship docked in Sydney and I met Bob Sherlock again and asked about Dusty. Dusty and Bob had been good mates, so he told me the story. Dusty got himself caught by the authorities and charged as a deserter. He was placed aboard the ship, the 'Largs Bay', and returned to England. He took his punishment, whatever it was, and then re-joined the Merchant Navy. Sometime later he took another ship to Australia and once he arrived in Sydney, he promptly skipped ship again. It seems that Dusty had a relative in New Zealand and decided that he would take a ship over to there and see what he could get as work there. Only a few ships ran from Sydney to NZ and they were mostly bulk carriers. There was one that was called the Fort Beau Joy that was chartered for coal carrying along the Aussie coast. Apparently he arrived in Australia with a goodly sum of money, but was rather careless about its security. So just about everyone knew he was flush. He arranged with some of her crew to do a stowaway trip. He got aboard OK, she had then sailed to Newcastle for a full load of coal. After loading she left for New Zealand and a couple of days later his body was fished out of the Newcastle Harbour and it looked as if he had been in a nasty fight and had his head hit with something very hard. He was buried at the Sandgate Cemetery in Newcastle.

I later became a crew member of the one of the Bass Strait ferries, the Taruna, and whilst I was there I met my wife Grace, real name Lucy, which she didn't like. She was a 2nd class stewardess on board and had been in the Royal Navy, but had transferred when she had finished her stint. After four months or so, the Taruna was put into dock for maintenance and repairs, a few months worth. My girl friend went home to her parents place in Sarina.

Soon, another AB (Charlie McGraw) and myself I joined the 'East Gate' on a one way trip to England. (I had some business to attend to over there) Two of us were taken on under what was termed as Repatriation Articles. These terms were that we would get our normal Australian wages throughout the trip, and when we reached England, should we not be required for a return trip, we would be housed and victualled until transport was found and the wages would continue until the seaman was returned to the port of hire.

On return to Australia I became domiciled in Melbourne and I married my wife, but I stayed at sea.

Whereas my wife never went back to the sea, but became a tram conductress on the trams in Melbourne. I managed to keep going on the ships for about 12 months then we decided that we may be able to do better in Queensland as we couldn't even get on to the rental lists anywhere in Melbourne. Almost as soon as we arrived, we began home hunting, and we soon came across a partly built house in Holland Park. So we put down a £180 deposit and moved in a couple of months later. We had bought ourselves the basics of a home, a table and two chairs, a bed, and a lounge chair, all for about £28. With that little lot we began our home life and family and stayed there for the next 30 years. That £218 outlay took all of my holiday pay and leave allowances for the last 12 months, so it was back to sea again.

During that 30 years, we managed to have a family of two daughters. I also added another bedroom on to the house because my mother was coming from the UK. I knew that was a recipe for disaster because when you put two women in the one kitchen all you get is scrambled eggs. I couldn't live too long at a time with my wife, let alone adding my mother to the mix. However we managed. Also during that time I managed to procure an elderly 25' cabin cruiser, in 1959. Me and the kids and the wife had a lot of fun with that boat, despite the fact that it took me many man hours of loving labour to just keep the thing afloat. We would go out fishing and cruising around Moreton Bay and having a look at the bay islands. It was during this time that we decided that we would move on to MacLeay Island. I have lived here ever since 1986, when I was on leave and after I retired and to the present.

It was at that time that I joined the 'Ampol Seral' a tanker and stayed there for the remainder of my sea life. I left the sea, for good, coming up to Christmas 1986, just after the ship had spent time in Singapore dry dock for maintenance and repairs. When I got home I found that my wife was in hospital after a heart failure. So ended my life at sea, hello retirement.....

Bill Gould 2012

*Editor: Sadly Bill crossed the bar 22/06/2015 and his aches scattered at sea.....*