

**Barry remembers Captain James (Jim) Edward Luen.  
25<sup>th</sup> November 1939.**

Jen Reynolds a niece of James (Jim) Edward Luen has been working with us on the Tregenna web site in compiling information on the first of hopefully over 600 names on the Merchant Navy Roll of Honour. Here we report on her uncle Jim, a Merchant Naval Chief Officer of Barry. He died in 1939, on the 25th November off the coast of New Foundland / Nova Scotia. Jenny believes that Jim was very brave. She remembers being told that the Captain of the SS. Harlingen called for a volunteer to go over board during a severe storm with German U boat activity in the vicinity. He, Jim as Chief Officer on the HARLINGEN, went to release some tangled vegetation from the propeller.

He was able to do this and was hauled aboard with much cheering, then a wave crashed into the ship and he was washed overboard, and never seen again. He was apparently made a posthumous Captain. As Mr Luen was a serving Chief Officer he would of already had a Master's ticket. His details from the CWGC have him noted as Chief Officer. We are certain he was both highly respected and held in high esteem.

**“I can recall the terrible tears and mourning in my home at the time”. Jen Reynolds.**

At one time Jim cared for an albatross that landed on deck suffering from exhaustion, but recovered. There is a campaign to save the Albatross, spear headed by an Ellen MacCarthy. So impressed with his kind act, they asked permission to use the photograph in a brochure.



**A picture of Jim Luen, taken off the Straits of Magellan off Cape Horn.  
1939 on board the Harlingen. It must have been a short period before he was washed over board.  
The albatross had a wing span of 18 foot.**

**LUEN, Chief Officer, JAMES EDWARD, S.S. Harlingen (London). Merchant Navy. 25th November 1939. Age 43. Son of Albert Edward and Rebecca Luen; husband of Violet Victoria Luen, of Barry, Glamorgan. Father of Mary and June. Commemorated at Tower Hill Memorial, Panel 55.**

“Jim and family used to live in WOY WOY, a bungalow at the bottom of Cold Knap Way, as you walked down to the Watchtower beach. Many people remarked on the strange name, but Jim and his wife Violet married in the town of WOY WOY in Australia. WOY WOY is and was next door to where I grew up. WOY WOY was built for Jim, Jim lived there next door to me.

”. **Jen R.**

## **Knap Hotel, built by Jen's Grandmother Rebecca Luen.**



“I was born in the bedroom top left. On the right a bit behind Luen's cafe, you will see a bungalow. That is Hove-To, built for Sid Luen. I lived at the Hotel until I was 8 years old, then moved to Hove-T0 when war broke out. The Hotel was requisitioned by the Army as was the Cafe and the Shops at bottom of picture. Behind Hove-To is WOY WOY. It could be accessed through Cold Knap Way. My cousin June and Mary lived there. I was in and out of the bungalow then. When I lived at the Knap quite a lot of sea captains lived in that area. I can recall the Chubb family.....Captain Gentiles.....Captain Care of the Tregenna eludes me though but the actual name of the house- Tregenna is familiar but not sure why..... “. **Jen R.**

### **THE WATCHTOWER :**

“After the watchtower ceased to be used, Mr Luen rented the building and used it as tea-rooms, before converting the old lime kilns (which became The Beachcomber) into a cafe. At one time the Luen family catered for most of the visitors to Watchtower Bay. Dudley ran the bottom café, and his brother Sid ran the bungalow on the top of the bank, which was named "The Watchtower Tea Gardens", later to change its name to the "Lido Café". By the 50's it was known by all and sundry as "Luen's Cafe" and was the meeting place for the younger element who used the pool. This name was to change again when it turned into the first teenage disco in Barry. The "77 Club", run by Sam Watters, attracted youngsters from all over Barry. A faint outline of the name may still be seen on the roof.

In 1952 Luen's was used as a school when parents objected to their children being transferred from Romilly School to Barry Island School. This "Parents Strike" was the first recorded incident of its kind in Barry”. The Watchtower is by **Tom Clemetts.**

Jim's eldest daughter, Mary married a South African and has lived in South Africa since she was married. Youngest daughter of Jim, June lives in Symonds Yat. Lorraine Howard, daughter of Mary Luen who was daughter of Jim Luen who was drowned in 1939 recalls: "My grandmother, Violet, told me a story so like this when she visited us in South Africa when I was about 11 or 12 years old. I remember well where we were sitting and she recalled the story for me. She must have found life very hard as did so many others".. **Lorraine Howard.**

### **200 wooden crosses**

**Following this year's Merchant Navy Association (Wales), Barry Branch, Annual Seafarers' Service, which was held at The Barry Memorial Hall on Saturday, 15th September 2007. Members on behalf of the Branch laid down 200 wooden crosses at the Seafarers' monument. The Stone memorial incorporates the names of Barry and Vale merchant seamen who have given their lives at sea during the two world wars.**

My mum's cousin Jennifer Reynolds forwarded the article "200 wooden crosses" to me and it made mention of Jim Luen. He was my grandfather who was drowned when my mum was only 11 years old. We have always thought of him and the dreadful ordeal he and so many others at sea, had to endure in the 2 World Wars. My mum gave me a small wooden cross which someone gave her and it stands by my bed every night where I can look or hold it and it makes me feel nearer to her. She lives in South Africa now and I live in Ireland. Now my grandfather will have to be included in that cross. Thank you for that.

Barry and District News report:

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 1939

Tragedy on the high Seas

Barry Victim

News has reached Barry of the death on Saturday of Captain James Edward Luen, who was washed overboard from his ship off the coast of Nova Scotia. Captain "Jim" Luen as he was known to his large circle of friends in Barry, was the fourth son of Mrs. R. Luen of the cold Knap hotel, Barry and was a native of the town. Attended high street school before going to sea at an early age. During the last war he served for the duration with the Dover Patrol.

A keen artist, captain Leun held during 1937-1938 an exhibition of his work in the county hall, London. He was also the author of several books.

During the last voyage he saved the lives of two people, by performing an operation of the wireless instructions of a doctor in another ship.

He married in Sydney, Australia. Miss Violet Makepeace, fourth daughter of Mr. C. A. Makepeace, J P of Harbour Road, Barry and is survived by his widow and two daughters. The little missus Mary and June Leun, his mother Mrs. R. Leun and brothers. Merss Clive, Dudley, Brindley and Sidney Leun and Mrs. W. Herbert, Mrs. Davey and Mrs. N. Owen (sisters).

Apparently a young Jim Luen, walked out of school one day and was not heard of for two years until he came of a ship in Cardiff. Like so many had made what was known as a pier head jump.

NB: SS Harlingen was sunk just under two years later by U-75 on 5th August 1941.

# Barry District News

**ORGAN CHRONICLE.**  
of The (TEL. 378 BARRY DOCKS)  
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## NEWS

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## TRAGEDY ON THE HIGH SEAS

Barry Victim

News has reached Barry of the death of the Secretary of Captain James Edward Lunn, who was washed overboard from his ship off the coast of Nova Scotia.

Captain "Jim" Lunn as he was known to his large circle of friends in Barry, was the fourth son of Mrs. R. Lunn, of Cold Knop Road, Barry, and was a native of the town. Attended High School, before going to sea at an early age. During the last war he served for the "Avonmouth" with the Dover Patrol.

A keen sport, Captain Lunn held fishing certificates, an exhibition of his work in the County Hall, London. He was also the author of several books. During his last voyage he saved the lives of two people, one by performing an operation on the wounded crew members of a doctor on another ship.

He married in Sydney, Australia, Miss Violet Makgrew, fourth daughter of Mr. C. A. Makgrew, J.P., of Harbour Road, Barry, and is survived by his widow, and two daughters, the Misses Mavis and Joan Lunn, his mother, Mrs. R. Lunn, four brothers, Messrs. Chas. Dufferin, Brinley, and Sydney Lunn, and Mrs. W. Herbert, Mrs. Dyer and Miss N. Gwyn (deceased).

## CHEAP MILK SCHEME CRITICISED

Extension Sought

The honour of being elected Chairman of the first Committee of the new Borough Council to meet since its election fell to Alderman J. T. Maslin on the evening of the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee on Thursday of last week.

Alderman Maslin recalled that he served as a co-opted member of the Council's Committee for two years before he was elected on to the Council and that he was Chairman of the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee about 13 years ago.

It was agreed to elect a Vice-Chairman and Mrs. M. E. Holland was appointed on the proposal of Mrs. Rowland, seconded by Councilor H. R. Adams.

CHEAP MILK SCHEME

Some of the details and difficulties of the Government's Cheap Milk Scheme was explained by a deputising secretary of Mr. T. Lewis, Regional Marketing Officer of the South Wales Marketing Board, Messrs. O. R. Jones and J. L. Farmer of the South Wales Regional Milk Distributive Committee, and J. Thomas of the Barry Branch of the National Dairywomen's Association.

Mr. Lewis said the object of the Scheme was to provide milk in the home free of charge or at a charge less than the normal price for children under school age and for expectant mothers, according to the income of the household.

The price to be charged would be half one pint or 1/4 a gallon of which the distributor would receive 4d. per gallon all the year round. The quantity available would be one pint per day and so far as consumers were concerned there would be no medical test.

The administration of the scheme would be carried out by the Local Authority, who would have to bear the cost.

The Scheme had been designed to assist those people who could not afford to buy sufficient milk at full price.

Mr. Farmer said that the distributors were prepared to operate any scheme provided it could be done economically but the price of 4d. per gallon allowed by the Scheme for distribution was 4d. less than the agreed minimum of 5d. That was the only objection they had to the Scheme and if the present proposals were retained the distributors would have to refuse to operate the scheme.

Mr. W. H. Cruise said that while the Scheme was admirable for such Committees as that, the distributors would have to carry considerable administrative costs in addition to working on a reduced return.

Dr. F. I. Davies, Medical Officer of Health, said the new Scheme related to the supply of liquid milk and he was opposed to the supply of milk which had not been pasteurized. He would prefer an extension of the existing Scheme to the adoption of the new scheme. Raw milk was not safe unless treated by heat.

He did not think any Authority had sponsored the Scheme since the circular had been received. He had spoken and said farmers were not being asked to concentrate on the production of feeding stuffs rather than on cattle. He feared the administrative costs would absorb the whole of the rebate to be received from the Government.

Councilor J. R. K. Vickers asked if the present Scheme covered the needs of the district in which the Chairman replied that it was satisfactory that he had received complaints that too much milk was being given away.

Dr. Davies said that the present scheme should be extended to include between 1 and 3 years of age, and it was carried unanimously that he should prepare a report on these lines.

At the conclusion of the meeting of

## FATALITIES AT THE DOCKS

Two fatalities occurred at the Docks on Wednesday when John Evans, a labourer, of St. Trinny Street, Barry, was killed by his fall in the dock. He had apparently fallen in.

The other fatality concerned a Cardiff man, J. Connor of 13 Harry Street who was a member of the crew of a boat now in the docks.

It is thought he fell off his ship.

Walk down any street on the average every third house

Behind every name on the Barry – Merchant Navy Role of Honour is a person no longer with us, with family that both grieved and younger members that both still remember and grieve also. It is important that we remember and record the information before as with these brave men, it is lost forever. The intention is to make available to all such information and hope that in our future we may be able to have an interactive Roll of Honour. This, for both descendants and those that also remember and for those that care, to show that those that came after them, did not forget them and to record and preserve much of Barry's Maritime History. We hope that in time Barry will be able to host such information and memory in a museum or similar for our town and peoples. Meanwhile we can only record and preserve such heroism and memory for such a time that not only does the town remember but can again rise to the occasion as with its own Memorial Hall and this time band together to raise the funds necessary to build such a museum / visitor centre etc to hold its past for our children and our heroes.

With a little help from: Keith Greenway@ Tregenna.

[www.ss-tregenna.co.uk](http://www.ss-tregenna.co.uk)    [hernamewas.ss@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:hernamewas.ss@tiscali.co.uk)

Jim Luen is one of over 600 names on the MN – BARRY Roll of Honour – All to be remembered in detail.

**Example of future Museum entries: Hopefully, in a future museum, or at least on the internet on interactive pages, all on the Barry Merchant Navy Roll of honour, will be further remembered via access of each name, where all will be able to find additional information in tribute to all those lost. KG.**

EXAMINATION ON OATH.

Relating to the death of James Edward Luen on the Harlingen

By name and address supplied.

I was on the bridge on the morning of 25th Nov 1939. There was a high sea and an E.N.E. gale. At about 9.35a.m. the vessel shipped a heavy sea, and directly afterwards, I heard the First Mate Mr Luen, shouting for help, and could see him in the water about 100 feet to starboard. Four life bouys were thrown to him, and a raft was heaved over the ship's side at once, and I saw him grasp a bouy and get into it. The ship was kept as near to him as possible and on one occasion sighted. It was difficult for the look outs to see him on account of the heavy seas, and I wanted to swim to him with a line attached to a \*\*\*\*\* which had been thrown to him and which fell short.

It was impossible on account of the seas and the distance and I was restrained. At 11.35 a.m. we came quite close to Mr. Luen and I could see he was unconscious. I volunteered again to go to his assistance and went over to the side to him. The water was extremely cold and owing to the ship rolling and the heavy seas it was difficult to reach him. As he was in a bouy and I was on a swimming bowline he was more bouyant than I was and although I managed to grasp the bouy twice I was unable to hold it. When the those at the other end of the line saw that I myself was in distress and that Mr Luen was by this time out of my reach they hauled me aboard and I was taken to the stewards room for treatment. I saw no more of Mr Luen who was undoubtedly lost by now. I'm satisfied that every possible effort was made to rescue him

Signed Roy Dudley Creser 29th December 1939

It was hand written and clearly faded so could not read, one word marked with stars

**We at the Her name Was Tregenna web site remember Captain Care of Barry, South Wales and his crew of the SS.Tregenna, we further remember all with no known grave but the sea and those in particular at rest at Merthyr Dyfan. Churchill recognised that without the Merchant Navy all would have been lost and Kipling told that without the Merchant Men and Merchant ships – “Britain would starve”. The German determination to destroy our unarmed Merchant ships faster than we could build them was devastating and although every seafarers next voyage may have been and often was his last. Never did such ships fail to have full crews. The bravery of these good men kept our supply lines open and our forces armed, our people were both fed and free.**

**In all conflicts Merchant Men and Ships are called upon when our country calls, as a Town and Port Barry has always played its part. Few streets had no losses in both World Wars and the community grieved heavily. Pride in Barry! There is no doubt and this year 11/11 must have had its largest numbers attending in many years. With so many of the brave, no longer with us, it is marvelous to see the youth of Barry flying the flag. It has often been said ” Let them that come after us, remember us” Barry has shown that as a town and community it Remembers Greatly – Thank you Barry.**

# **The Listener**

14 March 1940

## **'Man Overboard !'**

**By Commander A. B. Campbell**

Do you remember what Kipling said of the men and ships of our merchant navy? No truer word was ever written than this 'If anything hinders their coming – you'll starve'; and believe me they get plenty of hindrances these days. Mines, U-boats, and planes are all directed to stopping our merchantmen from carrying raw materials and food-stuffs to this island of ours. We seldom hear of their work but I am privileged in as much as I meet many of them when they come ashore and at great difficulty, can be made to talk about themselves.

One day last month I saw a notice in a shipping paper to the effect that a certain officer 'had been washed overboard and lost'. Just that bare announcement. I have a letter here from a sailor friend who tells me what actually happened on that morning. I will read you his letter. But I must omit any mention of names and places. Believe me this is an actual experience and this is what he says:

'Perhaps the best thing I can do is to give you a plain untarnished account of the tragic end of our mutual friend and the best shipmate I ever sailed with'.

'We were bound from Philadelphia to X to pick up a convoy. Yesterday we ran into some really nasty weather, wind force 8, and a dirty sea and swell. These ships almost stop themselves with a head wind and swell and we were making about three knots, when one of the forward ventilators worked loose and the starboard cable which as usual had been secured in hawser pipe with cement also broke loose. The first mate and the carpenter went forward to secure them. They had just finished the job and "Chippy" was still by the windlass whilst the mate had left the fo'c'sle head and was crossing the forward well deck when the first really heavy sea we had shipped came clean over the fo'c'sle head and flooded the well deck. Chippy saw it coming and hung on to the windlass but the first mate was taken seawards and was washed clean over the side'.

'I was on the bridge at the time and the Old Man yelled "Look out for Chippy". You can imagine our horror after seeing that Chippy was alright to hear the first mate calling for help twenty yards from the ships side. We immediately let go three lifebelts and I was aft and heaved a raft over side which had been constructed in case we were sunk by the enemy. The first mate managed to get a lifebelt on and then we swung around, but these ships carry their sway for a long time, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that we sighted the raft and subsequently the first mate'.

**‘The Old Man deserves the greatest credit for the manner in which he managed to pick him up, especially the second time, for I regret to say that we were unable to get a line to him, because as soon as the engines were stopped we were (SOME TEXT MISSING )**

**“I was going to try and swim to him but he was a good quarter-of-a mile off, and the steward forced me into his cabin and locked the door. He was quiet right as I found out later... After the first mate had drifted past – and they tell me he was only twenty feet from the lifebuoy at one moment, and we had a line attached to that lifebuoy – the steward unlocked the door and I ran on to the bridge. The sea had by this time increased to such an extent that it was impossible to get a boat away and even if we had, we should never have picked it up again.**

**“Several of us went up the mast again, the ship having swung round I managed to spot him fine on the starboard bow. After the Old Man made a fine job of it for he brought the ship immediately to windward of him so that we drifted down almost alongside. By this time he was unconscious, probably dead, so the line throwing apparatus was useless. To see him drifting by with no chance of getting him aboard was terrible, so I stripped and I attached a bowline round my chest , but the men hung on to me and the steward ran up to the Old Man to ask permission to try to go over the side. The Old Man refused, but I wasn’t going to see the first mate go to his death without a chance, and I think the men must have been almost as frantic as myself.**

**‘Anyway, over I went. God it was cold. At one moment thirty feet in the air and the next thirty feet under water. The men daren’t slack away too fast in case I slipped out of the running bowline, there having been no time to make a proper job of it. Twice I had him in my arms, but the terrific seas and the ship rolling so so-heavily, that’s tightening the rope round my body and jerking me this way and that, tore him away from me and the men then hauled me aboard. My body was quite uncontrollable with the cold even in the comparatively short time I was in the water, so it is indeed a wonder that the first mate remained conscious as long as he did’.**

**‘The steward told me later that he ran aft just in time to see the first mate slip out of the belt and sink when he was just **abaft** the main mast’.**

**‘The Old Man took one more look round, and then resumed the passage. It was an hour before I could hold a cup to my lips, but hot blankets and massage did the trick, and a couple of hours in my bunk and then on watch again’.**

**‘This is the end of my sorry report, but I think you can read between the lines and experience with us the hopes and fears of that morning, The utter **impotency** and sense of bitter defeat, that each of us knew, who loved the first mate and finally gave up hope of rescuing him’.**

**That is all, just a sailors’ account of what to him is all in a day’s work.**

**"There are no graves: no crosses: No where a loved One can shed a tear: We should remember them." Barry’s own David Simpson**

**Also in memory of Mary, recently departed but loved and remembered by the Luen family.**