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Hello Mike

It was to say the least a complete surprise to receive your letter last month, yes it is forty years since our paths last crossed and a lot of water has gone under the bridge since then. Never the less it was good to hear from you, I still see your handy work with the knife on a daily basis, fortunately for me there were no long term effects although it still tingles a bit in the cold weather.

I will now try to give you a potted version of what has happened to me over the years. Phil Fenwick and I joined Saguenay after leaving the "Conway" and we sailed together on the same ship for the first two years and then never sailed together again. Phil swallowed the anchor after failing his 2nd Mates Certificate and the last I heard of him was as a painter and decorator in his home town of Paisley. After our first year with we were joined by two more Conway cadets, Dave Donaldson and another lad whose name escapes me but who also gave up the sea when he failed his 2nd Mates. Dave is still with them as the director of shipping and he is based over in Montreal, we still keep in contact albeit on a hit and miss basis. I stayed with Saguenay for seven years ending up as the youngest chief officer in the company, they were a company that most people joined for a couple of years to avoid the taxman, which I successfully did for the whole time that I was with them. Following that I spent two years with Cadbury's as a production supervisor and then I joined Esso on the tankers, stayed there for a couple of years. Following that I came ashore with Dowie & Marwood, part of New Zealand Shipping Co., as an Assistant Cargo Superintendent, they were then taken over by P & O so I opted out and went with Rea Ltd., as a Stevedore Superintendent, stayed there for two years then rejoined P & O as a Superintendent and stayed there until I was made redundant in 1978. Joined North Sea Ferries sailing on the Hull/Zeebrugge route, after just under two years they were absorbed into the main P & O ferry operation and I was made redundant yet again. Fortunately for me I had just got a position with CIGNA then known as INA, I joined them in London then went up to Manchester as their first Surveyor outside London, after that I moved down to Liverpool when they opened a new office, that was for three months but it lasted 7 years. Due to the advent of computers it was decided that we could do without Liverpool so I was moved back to Manchester and eventually I ended up in the Leeds office.

Yes, I knew Keith very well whilst I was with CIGNA, he was one of the young bucks in city office, at no time did I ever think of him being your son, small world isn't it. I did 16 years with them and then was chopped in ten minutes, supposedly downsizing, the truth was I upset our Australian M.D. and the Marine Director as I stood up at one of the company seminars to talk about training opportunities within the company. I used the wrong script and criticised the company for their lack of proper training, you can imagine how that went down.

It was following my demise from CIGNA that I wrote to T.M.C., as I was looking for work wherever I could get it, in the end I decided to set up on my own as "KD MARINE" doing a mixture of work initially cargo claims subcontracting for various other survey outfits, but mainly for Wendt & Co. I found that wasn't giving me the work that I wanted so I started working as an independent superintendent for a company called MRM based on the Wirral. Their main line of business is working for banks and other financial institutions carrying out conditions surveys, etc., and arresting vessels when the owners had not paid the mortgage. During this time I spent long periods working abroad in France, Spain, Africa and South America, I spent six months in Argentina following the arrest of a Turkish geared bulk carrier, I sacked the skipper and the officers after the crew mutineered and took command of the ship myself and hired Uruguayan officers with a special dispensation from the Turkish Government. I then dry-docked the ship and acted as docking

superintendent, before taking her up river to load a cargo and then delivered the ship and cargo to Turkey, it was to say the least quite an adventure whilst it lasted. Whilst I was initially looking for subcontract work I approached International Surveyors and Adjusters Ltd., for some work but without any success, things took an unusual turn and they asked me to join them in their Sale, Manchester office, however at that time I was not interested in working for someone else after my experience with Cigna. The MD would not take no for an answer and in November 1996 after almost twelve months I agreed to join them, at that time I had a private agreement with the MD that we would give it six months and then review the situation. I found them to be a good company to work for and I am still with them having been promoted to manager of the Sale office after my six month trial period. Part of my agreement is that I will undertake overseas work as and when necessary, which is supposed to be for three months a year, things on the overseas side have been quiet for the last two years and I have not had to travel. I am also responsible for the marketing of the company in the north of England, not one of my favourite jobs but one that has to be done especially in our area as there are so many survey companies that you have to work hard to get the business.

On the domestic side my first wife died after we had been married 24 years and I have one daughter and one grand-daughter from that marriage. I was then very lucky and met a lady (Hilary) who is 17 years my junior and I am now remarried and we have three daughters, aged 15, 11 and 9 years. Outside work I spend a considerable amount of time at the swimming baths teaching children to swim and coaching the club's Junior Team, having become an A.S.A. qualified swimming teacher, timekeeper and judge. When not teaching or coaching I am a member of the clubs' committee and I also officiate at various swimming galas in the Stockport and Manchester area.

I hope that you are enjoying life as a surveyor, I have always considered myself to be very lucky as I thoroughly enjoy the life of a surveyor and there are not many people who can actually say that they enjoy their work, I can.

When it comes to keeping in touch with other old Conways, I have not been very good at that, in fact I suppose that I have been a bit of a failure as I can't really say that I have kept in touch with anyone.

As for my being shot dead, no not quite, I was shot twice, once across the ribs and once through the back of the neck, the bullet being lodged close up to my jugular vein, when I came round after forty-eight hours the consultant in the Corpus Christi hospital told me that if I wasn't so thick in the neck then I would have been dead. I had another interesting experience when I was with ESSO tankers as chief officer on the ESSO LINCOLN, we had just discharged 50,000 tones of aviation spirit and JFK New York and where on our way back down to South America when the flexy coupling on the main engine sheered and spewed lubricating oil across the main engine, this caused a flash fire in the engine room which took us 48 hours to put out and we were then adrift in the Atlantic for one week waiting for a tug to tow us into port in the southern states. We remained there for three months whilst they sorted things out, carrying out a full dry docking at the same time.

Well Mike I think that has just about brought you up to date with what has happened over the last forty years. I do get down to London on occasions but that is usually when I go to our head office in Sidcup or in London itself for meetings and occasionally doing some marketing with one of the directors.

Give my best wishes to Keith and ask him to remember me to the lads at Cigna, especially Bob Valente if he still sees him.

Very best wishes to you and the family for a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful start to the New Millennium .

Best regards

