

I was 3rd Engineer on Elders 'Eboe', a 6 cyl Scott Doxford.

As I went on watch one night at midnight the engine slowed down and stopped. Rushing round the job (as one does) I saw that while the engine was slowing down both camshafts had stopped. Of course the next thing, the Chief was on the phone "What the \*\*\*\* is going on?" "I think the chain has broken." "What \*\*\*\*\* chain?" "The \*\*\*\*\* camshaft chain." - Deathly silence!

We opened up No.6 crankcase door and there was the chain, in knots round the crankshaft. It took 12 hours to unravel it, cutting it off with a hacksaw as we released short lengths with the turning gear and a handy billy.

When we got the old chain off we found that it had stripped the teeth off the crankshaft chainwheel. Scotts' in their wisdom had fitted this wheel in two halves to the collar on the crankshaft, so it was a straightforward job to remove it. Unfortunately, the holes for the fitted bolts were quite badly damaged.

We found that we had a spare wheel bolted to the bulkhead, covered in white paint. But what to do about the holes and the fitted bolts some of which were bent? We had on board a few expanding reamers which were carried for another job which regularly cropped up (that's another story) so with the aid of these we were able to clean up the holes and then made new fitted bolts on the lathe out of generator bottom end bolts and got the new wheel fitted.

Next job was the spare chain which we extracted from its oil bath storage. Believe me an oily Doxford chain is an awkward thing to handle, there seemed to be miles of it and it had a life of its own!

Eventually, we set the engine on No.1 TDC, locked the camshafts in the correct position, fed the chain round the various sprockets and riveted up the ends after a couple of turns to see everything was as it should be.

After checking all the bits and pieces we had disturbed we boxed the engine up and gave it a try. Needless to say, being a Doxford it ran perfectly first time.

Total time stopped, 48 hours. Good fun while it lasted!

During the job the Chief injured his knee and retired hurt, the 2nd went down with heat exhaustion - but the Purser's Dept. did sterling work trimming cold Wrexham lager down to the lads.

A couple of days later, in Lagos, when the Chief advised the Head Office of our adventure, their reply was that we couldn't have done all this, "because there was no spare chainwheel in the spare gear list."

Bloody typical!!!

Derek