

The QE2: Cunard have warned that the dispute may force her sale

Defiance in mid-Atlantic
as QE2 men tell union:
We don't want to strike

LET US SAIL IN PEACE

By PETER HITCHENS

CREWMEN of the Cunard flagship QE2 in mid-Atlantic last night rejected their union's strike call.

They telexed London that they "do not wish to partake in any further industrial action" in the current dispute.

Cunard chairman Lord Matthews was "heartened" by the move.

"These are people whose jobs are at stake," he said, "and as they quite rightly say the union action is not helping their case."

The difference between them and the union is the difference between having a principle involved and having your job involved.

The QE2's union liaison committee also told National Union of Seamen headquarters that "action taken so far has been detrimental" to the crews of both the flagship and of the Cunard Countess, which is stranded by strike in Barbados.

As the QE2 neared New York—from where she will go cruising—the crew also urged the union to start new negotiations and let the Countess crew come home.

FLAG

The row is over a Cunard decision to transfer the Countess and another cruise liner, Princess—which is in dry dock in Puerto Rico—to a "flag of convenience" in a bid to cut losses in the Caribbean.

Officers said intimidation had been used to sustain a sit-in by union members on board the Countess.

Lord Matthews explained: "I don't know to what extent, but there has been a degree of intimidation. We are given the impression that 70 per cent would like to go home, but they have been warned they will lose their union cards if they do."

But NUS leader Mr Jim Slater—he is currently in Geneva—denied it, saying: "I would sack any official of this organisation who threatens a member."

He also said that any action taken would be "to safeguard the jobs" of all Cunard crews "threatened by the proposals to sail under a foreign flag."

The union is planning to involve Cunard in a strike of crews when they reach British ports, to paralyse shipping at home ports for one day on November 3, and seek an international "blockade."

Top brass in Mole hunt firing line

WHITEHALL was in turmoil last night as Mrs Thatcher launched her Government's biggest mole-catching operation.

Security experts inside and outside the Ministry of Defence, including police and intelligence officers, were drafted in with the simple instruction: Get him!

They were also checking on the Treasury. But it was an open secret that they expected the culprit to be a man in military uniform.

Top security officers in MI5, Britain's internal secret service, were being kept in close touch with progress.

"Heads will roll in Whitehall, and they may well have scrambled egg all over their caps," said a top official.

Cabinet Ministers have grown almost phlegmatic over the Government's leaky record. "We're always looking for leaks. It's like a sieve," said one.

Secret

But this time it is seen as going too far—publication of secret memos addressed to the Defence Secretary.

The investigation is more determined than any launched in the last year or so, none of which led to disciplinary action.

The new row started when documents fell into the hands of the Press Association. They included a private letter from Chief Treasury Secretary Mr John Biffen to Defence Secretary Mr Francis Pym calling for cuts of £500 million a year in defence spending.

Copies of the documents have now been given to the

By ANDREW TAYLOR

Investigators by the news agency. The originals have gone back to the Mole to help him cover his tracks.

And to add insult to injury, the agency has now published "confidential" details of a meeting of service chiefs discussing the proposed cuts.

The latest document showed heads of the three services quarrelling bitterly: Cash for the Army's new Challenger tank, and for the RAF's Jaguar and Harrier replacement aircraft would be "inadequate," said General Sir Edwin Bramall and Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Beetham. And Admiral Sir Henry Leach protested that the cuts would be particularly unfair on the Navy.

Britain's war reserves of petrol, oil and engine lubricants for the forces were examined as possible targets for cuts.

According to one document Mr Pym insisted the fuel savings investigation should include war reserves "on a judgment of the low potential risk of an extended period of tension in the next few months."

Later he was warned that



Toodle-oo! Actor Tom Baker yesterday, bowing out as TV's Dr Who

By DAVID WIGG

**GOODBYE!
TOM
QUITS AS
Dr WHO**

ACTOR Tom Baker, better known to 100 million TV viewers in 37 countries as Dr Who, hung up his long striped scarf and floppy hat yesterday.

He will make his last trip in the Tardis time machine in March when the next series ends.

Tom's retirement after six years as the inimitable Time Lord immediately started

feverish speculation as to who would take over his role.

The BBC admitted: "We know who we want to replace him." But they would give no clue to the identity, because "negotiations continue."

"It could even be a woman," said Tom. "After all, there is no reason why Dr Who should always be a man."

Retirement spells an end to the good life for Tom—a salary of nearly £1,000 a week, a string of glamorous young

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It's goodbye to all this!



Girl No. 2: Louise Jameson (Leela) and Tom

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assistants, not to mention a marvellous acting role.

"I've enjoyed every single minute of it. It was never hard work, simply because it was such fun.

"But I honestly think I've given the series everything I have to give. I think it's time to let someone else have a go."

Tom said he had no work lined up, and admitted that his friends thought he was mad to give up such a lucrative role when jobs were hard to come by.

But it was not the money he would miss so much as the international appeal as a "harmless hero" whom children need never fear.

Confronting so many awestruck young fans, has led the gangling 6ft 3in actor to an original approach.

He drops to his knees and asks: "Mayn't I seen you watching telly?"

When they nod shyly, he says triumphantly: "Thought so! - I never forget a face. Can I have your autograph, please?"

Eccentric

Tom has been joined on the screen by no fewer than five delectable assistants over the years.

The first was Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah Jane Smith. Then came Louise Jameson as Leela, Mary Tamm as Romana and Lalla Ward as Lady Romana.

New girl, Australian actress Janet Fielding, will play his assistant Tegan in his last series.

Tom, something of an eccentric in real life—he studied to become a monk before switching to acting—is the fourth Dr Who since the series was launched in 1963.

The first was the late William Hartnell, second was Patrick Troughton, followed by Jon Pertwee.



No. 5: Janet Fielding

Tom says farewell to Dr Who, glamour, and £1,000 a week



Elisabeth Sladen (Sarah Jane)

—Dr Who's first assistant



Glamour girl No. 3: Mary Tamm

with wonder dog K9 and Dr Who



Assistant No. 4, just retired: Lalla Ward (Lady Romana) with the doctor

Blast town weeps as 48 children are buried

THE GRIEF of the little Spanish mining town of Ortucua welled to a heart-rending climax yesterday as townsfolk buried 48 of their children.

An estimated 70,000 mourners jammed roads and even railway tracks as they made their way to the makeshift church—a huge 250-foot factory shed which shielded several thousand from the driving rain.

Some mothers collapsed in hysteria and were taken away in ambulances as the first of the little white coffins were carried in.

Two teachers and a plumber were also killed in Thursday's gas explosion which demolished the town's four-storey school.

Eight of the 30 injured dragged from the wreckage are still seriously ill—three of them critical.

Schools throughout Spain closed yesterday in mourning.

MYSTERY BEAST BAFFLES POLICE

THE mystery beast of Pault-y-Drain farm had police baffled last night.

All day four marksmen and RSPCA men with tranquilliser guns kept watch on a haybarn at the farm.

They were not sure what it was they were hunting but with the evidence of four sheep mauled to death on the lonely hills round Llangurig, Mid-Wales, they were taking no chances.

A police spokesman said: "We assume now that it is a large cat, possibly a puma or lynx. If that's right, you're talking about a body weight of 200 lb and claws like bloody needles."

By DEREK HORNBY

"If it's capable of killing a sheep and eating half a carcass on the spot, you're thinking in terms of not going in too quickly."

He said the dead sheep's injuries were thought to be more than a dog could inflict. "You could wave your hand about in the hole where the lumps were bitten out."

Hiding

During the day two of the four police marksmen ventured inside the barn doorway, heard growls and rapidly came out again.

But last night the mystery deepened when a police dog went into the barn and came out unharmed.

A police officer said: "We have found nothing so far, but we are not giving up or taking any chances. The animal could be hiding."

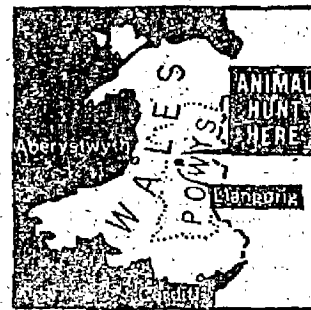
"Our marksmen will remain at the barn all night if necessary until the search has been completed."

"There are hundreds of tons of hay to be shifted and prodded before we can pull out."

And those growls? They could have been owls snoring said a police officer.

"But owls or not, we're staying," he said.

Police were called in by farmer Mr Michael Nash, 56, who said: "We heard a bit of a queer noise from the barn for a day or so, but didn't take any notice of it at first. It



was like a drunken man snoring."

"But we found four sheep dead and yesterday we had a live lamb with an enormous lump bitten out of it."

He said he had seen cat-like paw marks "as big as your fist."

Panther

Zoos and circuses in the area have been contacted, but say none of their animals was missing.

Whatever it is and wherever it came from, the creature is thought to be connected with a flood of calls to police in the Wolverhampton area two weeks ago from people saying they'd seen a panther.

Sir Harold heads bid for ITV station

FORMER Premier Sir Harold Wilson is heading a bid to take over one of Britain's Big Five TV companies.

He is chairman of a consortium which wants to run Yorkshire Television—and call it Television Yorkshire—when new franchises are issued in December.

On the board with him are businessmen and two former YTV presenters who are now MPs, Austin Mitchell (Labour, Grimsby) and Jonathan Aitken (Tory, Thanet East).

Clashes

Earlier this year, staff at YTV announced they were setting up a rival group after several clashes with the management.

Yesterday, after a meeting of 200 staff, they revealed their hand—with Sir Harold as their leader.