



# REG LAKE

You could say the docks were right on his doorstep! From the window of his tiny office in the nineteenth-century dock office at King's Lynn, traffic superintendent Reg Lake can keep his eye on what's going on in Alexandra Dock; and the Bentinck dock is not far away.

Reg Lake, a young sixty-three-year-old, started work as a junior clerk with the King's Lynn Docks and Railways company in 1923. 'Everything's changed; even people', he says. But he also admits that the

'personal touch' he remembers so well from the early days is still retained at King's Lynn, in a way that is only possible in a smaller port. The docks manager's door is always open, and there is no question of being unable to consult him on day-to-day problems. This close contact between management and dockers has heightened respect and trust between them, thereby accounting for the good labour relations enjoyed at the port.

Reg Lake's work as traffic superintendent involves him in arranging for the berthing of ships and organising labour to handle the cargo—'scheming', he calls it. He must ensure that both his customers and those doing the work are happy. For this, 'patience of Job' is required, he says, 'and if you make a bargain you must keep it'.

At present King's Lynn has handling facilities for roll-on/roll-off cargo—such as cars and caravans—as well as for general and bulk cargo such as steel and timber. But the key-word at King's Lynn is 'ingenuity', and whatever the cargo, they will have a go at handling it!

Mr. Lake is glad that the days when dockers worked up to their knees in mud have gone. The docks have changed greatly since the 1920s, with the appearance of modern cranes instead of the ship's gear

formerly used for lifting some cargoes. Part of Reg Lake's day is usually taken up by a walk round the docks to see the jobs going on at the various sheds. In planning for shed space he usually has to look three ships ahead. The docks are part and parcel of the town, and share its characteristics. Reg Lake, being Norfolk born and bred, typifies these characteristics! Relaxed and friendly, a twinkle in his eye suggests that the Norfolk man is nobody's fool.

He sees no point in getting needlessly worked up over life. He would rather spend his energy on a game of tennis—what he lacks in speed he reckons to make up for with craft! He enjoys all sport and is also a keen gardener, as well as a Gilbert and Sullivan fan.

Reg Lake could also be described as an all-round entertainer! A spare-time interest which he shyly admits to (but which he enjoys very much) involves taking part in concert-parties organised to entertain elderly people and to raise funds for charity.

Reg Lake and his wife have two sons, neither of whom work in the docks industry—'I said I would shoot them if they went into docks'.

Somehow, I doubt whether he meant this. Reg Lake obviously enjoys his work at the docks—in fact, by all accounts, he and his job get on rather well together!