

EQUATOR COMES TO LONDON!

Victim Number One in London's first Crossing the Line ceremony was Peter Arne. King Neptune's alap with a kipper set the tone of the proceedings, prior to the gentle shaving to which the accused are traditionally subjected when crossing the equator for the first time. The accusation is that the accused hasn't crossed the Line before. After that it remains to cast him into the drink, and even that isn't the end.

Shapely Yvonne Buckingham came next. Her previous connection with maritime affairs was in the film "The Captain's Table", but even then she didn't cross the line, so now she was really for it, ordeal by kipper not omitted.

Centuries ago, frightened sailors used to throw somebody overboard in stormy weather, as a sacrifice to whatever gods were supposed to be angry. And who wouldn't pretend to be, with the prospect of having Yvonne thrown at them?

As London couldn't go to the equator, they had to bring the equator to London; pity they couldn't bring equatorial sunshine too. Poor Yvonne slipped up a bit when she went to receive her prize from Janette Scott, the lucky star who had the best end of the frolic. You wouldn't put it past Neptune to have the floor greased. Peter Arne was next.

The idea of showing Crossing the Line in London was the brainwave of a shipping company, to get us all in a gay mood, ready for Christmas; also, perhaps, to warn us what to expect if we decide to dodge the winter by taking a cruise in equatorial waters. Neptune himself returned to his natural element, followed by his court. They had a good time, at any rate.