H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

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CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION, ROBIN SMITH

CONTENTS

Andy's Musings	Click Here to Go There
Navy Matters	Click Here to Go There
All You Need to Know about Carriers	Click Here to Go There
Nozzers Go West	Click Here to Go There
Back in '56	Click Here to Go There
Sailors I have known	Click Here to Go There
12 Years on and Under the Waves	Click Here to Go There
Photo Album	Click Here to Go There
Slops	Click Here to Go There
Crossed the Bar	Click Here to Go There
People Searching for People	Click Here to Go There

ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

Robin's newsletter once asked for tales of other ships we've been on. At that time, chewing the fat with late shipmate Pete Tasker, reminiscing about my holiday in north Germany, he mentioned once having been a crew on a landing craft on the Rhine – sounded exciting – I pressed him to put the experience on paper; it was off-beat and interesting. Alas! another intention down the drain for want of time.

HMS Antelope in San Carlos Water 1982

I learned recently that the only sinking in the Falkland's war, whose wreck had never been located, is a Royal Marine crewed landing craft, sunk by a bomb; four upper deck crew, marines, perished.

In the engine room was Royal Navy chief M.E.M. and A.L.E.M. who also perished. The craft in question had, in days earlier, taken in excess of a hundred men off ***H.M.S. Antelope*** before it blew up and split in two. I am unable to detail the type of landing craft amongst a family of, at least, a dozen, but a smaller type of Landing craft tank fits the scene. I do know its call sign was Foxtrot 4, her captain Colour Sergeant Brian Johnson. Each anniversary of the sinking of Royal Marine No. 4 Assault Squadron hold a memorial for them.

Thinking of the average ages at that time I assume the bulk of ***Antelope*** rescued must still be alive – and - eternally grateful.

My own brush with landing craft was a Landing Craft Mechanised whilst drafted to mining trials at Vernon. This vessel is large enough for one tank or a large lorry. The wheelhouse was about the volume of a sentry box with a single window on each flank. It was no slouch when moving over water empty; propulsion was provided by two Hudson Invader inline six cylinder 'petrol' engines. Should you be of a better memory than this chicken – the 'petrol' – dyed red to prevent use in your motor bike etc. at that time was a heinous crime. The name tells you motors were U.S. lorry type. The craft spent its time, when not in use, on a tiny jetty in the Severn estuary

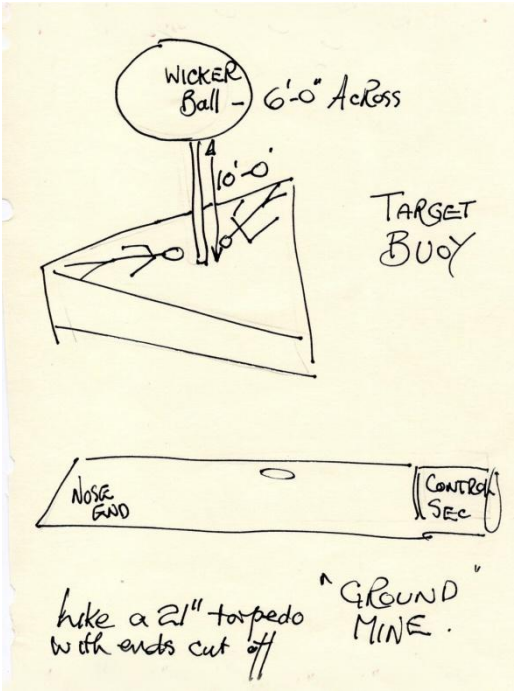
INDEX

up the Bristol Channel, sort of behind Weston-Super-Mare, upstream towards Clevedon. Our area of operation, a vast, lovely, flatish pure sand bank with slight undulations; the title on the chart is Langford Bank, it was an M.O.D. restricted area. In its centre was a very large buoy target big enough to lay on with one's head at centre pole on balmy days, waiting for the tide to go out!

We Royal Navy people lived in a tiny square formed by three Nissan huts surround with barbed wire on an R.A.F. airfield outside Weston – I think it's now the site of the Helicopter National Collection. When required for a trial we got there by train from Vernon – Pompey. Half a dozen 'inert ground mines' were delivered to the R.A.F. field by lorry, to wait the arrival of a Lancaster bomber for loading. Could not resist a perch on the end of the runway when it was due, meet the crew and view the plane while the R.A.F. people loaded the plane; them called Erk's?

The following day to Langford Bank, in a lorry, to wait for the Lancaster to drop height to prevent pulling drogue off, which must have been two or three hundred feet at a reduced speed. Aim point, the 'basket buoy' with 'built in error', so as not to sink the buoy; a lovely sight that made the hair on the back of the neck tingle. Following the drop a wing waggle and a wave the Lancaster went back up north, home.

Crank up L.C.M., sail out and mount buoy to await low tide to expose dropped mines. Hop off buoy and scatter to find mines, each with a coil of wire and a small Dan buoy to fix location for when the tide is back up; L.C.M picks up wire, hauls mine on board then back, by lorry, to Vernon's Boffins. Anti-mining, shock loadings were their interest, control section of mine was 'surprisingly sophisticated'. A three-barrel squid mount was also on a concrete pad on the foreshore, same reason.



On one memorable trial the ground mines were spaced on the beach in a star formation, ordinary 'depth charge' – live, on the end in the centre. A surveyors 'boning rod' alongside the depth charge to measure the water depth as the tide came in, the charge was to be blown by the wire from our 'gunner' ashore. A Scout pack, camping along the foreshore, was invited by our gunner; had the chief scout herd them up the hill behind us so the whereabouts of all were accounted for. The blow was in exactly nine feet water depth, the spectacle was memorable with a dull

INDEX

boom that seemed to rock the universe. The rising tide had several merchant men on their way up to Avonmouth; all must have asked "What the hell was that?" signal lamps clacking away on overtime. I would wager those boy scouts talk about it to this day.

An unbelievable posting; the civil boffins, for whom we laboured, were the cream of people, always willing to teach, always in the midst of any skylarking.

Shore leave each evening, was a short bus ride to Weston; a regular ferry to and from Cardiff with holiday makers and day trippers provided a surfeit of Welsh pulchritude. Scrumpy was on tap in all pubs, cheaper than beer, it's what the locals consumed; a glass or two had half the naval contingent was hell bent on stamping out chastity in south Wales.

Another spectacle which we enjoyed were trips to Worthy Down near Winchester. During World War 2 it had been a naval air station, I have forgotten the name of the bird it was named for. In a large Quonset type hanger, a single limbo barrel sat in the centre on a fabricated trunnion , the barrel a few degrees off vertical. We loaded the projectiles as requested ….Half a dozen sheets were removed from the roof. The boffin loaded the propellant case, screw plug on breech, took a polished copper disc of half palm size, above that a steel ball bearing. After firing disc removed width of indent made by ball measured by micrometer to arrive at correct required charge. Simplicity of some methods was a surprise.

On firing the 500lb-ish limbo bomb flew out of the roof hole to impact down field on grass runway. Anyone on the top deck of a bus on the Winchester Road, who looked in the direction of the report, may have seen a bomb fly skywards out of the roof; bet they also asked "What the hell was that?"

A strange tribe occupied Worthy Down, it being the school for the 'regulating branch'. All their movements, class to class, square bashing or just going anywhere was done in Crusher style, hands clasped behind back, slow measured tread with 'tuff' scowl on face, exuding a 'commanding presence', meant to make you 'frit'.

The final landing craft in my life was Landing Craft Infantry, the sort seen in documentaries which hit the beach with about twenty soldiers. To cut out how and why – at the war's end they were on the mud in great numbers downstream from Gillingham Pier. My father, resident in Midlands, who knew absolutely F.A. about boats bought one for less than peanuts; in the hull was an aluminum dingy of riveted construction, a little beauty. Landing craft engines were removed, cooling water 'in and out' blocked with a wooden bung, all else remained; two brass propellers and shafts, bilge pump in brass, plus other assorted stuff, just left. A top was erected. Spartan fit out houseboat style.

INDEX

Afloat on the Thames just below Reading; setting idyllic for parents holidays and weekends. Motive for acquisition was not love of boating; parent was a steam devotee, location a stone's throw from elevated section of Great Western Railway line, Paddington to Bristol. (G.W.R.) God's wonderful railway; kings, castles, manors plus all freight types passing all day.

Family boats did not end there, 'Father's' flock of ducks lived in an R.E. boat section for bridge building. They must have enjoyed it, egg production kept rural barter alive and highly active.

I know – gone on too long.

(Photographs from Andy's collection)

INDEX

NAVY MATTERS

Mike Leary Recalls in "Royal Navy Memories"

I joined the mob in 79 and left ten years later and rue the day I ever walked out of the gates at Rosyth without a look back. Though you were on different ships, you have stirred up a whole heap of thoughts that I thought were hidden forever.

I joined at Raleigh, went to Pembroke (East camp (CK), then Fife (Training Ship), then Nelson, then Naiad – Swapped to Yarmouth and went down south in 82, then Gannet (819 Sqdn), then Alderney (Fish Boat), then Faslane, decided I wanted to be a submariner, went to Dolphin (and Finwhale), then Swiftsure then Sceptre. Up until yesterday, I'd forgotten all of that. I'm damn sure I know some of the blokes you mention, but that might be my mind playing tricks and actually I just know a lot of blokes like them, getting up to the same stuff as them.

I am now steeped in nostalgia and slightly pee'd off to find that when I go round trying to visit my old navy days via Google Earth, I find much of it is now housing developments – Pembroke was the first disappointment – where have the stack of cannon balls down the main gate gone that I had to dismantle, polish and put back when under puns – getting shit from the lads as they went ashore to the Royal Marine (which thank goodness is still there – and still looks the same).

Where'd Chatham Dockyard gate go????… What's happened to the main gate at Guz dockyard (Levendale – just a big blue thing there now), why are there civvies on all the main gates? Just doesn't look the same anymore – very sad.

I'm now going to check out if the pubs are still there. Mucky Duck, – Portsmouth and so is the Two Twigs in Guz is so that's a start…..

I could go on, and on, but I won't. Not now anyway…

Cheers mate.

Mike.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BRITAIN'S AIRCRAFT CARRIER

2nd July 2020

HMS Kent and HMS Queen Elizabeth together during training at sea

The training included working alongside HMS Kent and her Merlin helicopter, as well as flight trials with UK F-35B fighter jets from RAF Marham in the North Sea.

Her return marks the first time she has arrived in Portsmouth as a "fully-trained aircraft carrier", according to the Royal Navy.

When the carrier embarks on her first operational deployment, the ship will need a Carrier Strike Group to protect her.

Last year, HMS Queen Elizabeth arrived in Canada along with other Royal Navy ships to spearhead a Carrier Strike Group (CSG) deployment.

Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon and Type 23 frigate HMS Northumberland sailed alongside the £3 billion aircraft carrier as part of the CSG.

Both Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, will require escorts in the form of CSGs when they deploy on operational duties.

WHAT FORMS A CARRIER STRIKE GROUP?

Protecting an aircraft carrier is a large scale task.

They require escorts in the form of Type 23 frigates, which have anti-submarine capabilities, and Type 45 destroyers with sophisticated air defence systems.

Minehunter vessels may also need to be deployed in case of a threat, with submarines providing vital protection beneath the surface.

1990s carrier strike group

Carrier HMS Ark Royal in the 1990s surrounded by an RFA fleet tanker, the Sandown-class minehunter, HMS Cromer and carrier escort ship HMS Gloucester.

A Carrier Strike Group will also need a replenishment ship, provided by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

This would contain all weaponry needs, as well as food for the sailors.

RFA Tideforce was part of the Carrier Strike Group on Westlant 19 in Canada last year.

In 2018, RFA Fort Rosalie delivered vital supplies to the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Arabian Gulf.

9th June 2020

Fort Rosalie transferred 96 pallets of stores to the Roosevelt, as part of her tasking with the aircraft carrier's strike group.

British personnel from RFA Fort Rosalie joined the US strike group in the Gulf.

They used the trip to see firsthand how operations are conducted aboard a US vessel, ahead of the RFA supporting the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

USS Theodore Roosevelt in the South China sea

A US Carrier Strike Group supporting and protecting the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the South China Sea

10th June 2020

The Royal Navy's new generation of aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, cost around £3 billion each.

The two ships will call on other vessels to support them, including Type 45 destroyers, Type 23 frigates, Astute Class submarines and, in the longer term, Type 26 frigates.

F-35s will operate from the UK's Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers for the next 50 years.

John Glenn...
As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind - every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder.

NOZZERS GO WEST Part 15

Probably their spirits were lifted a little when they learned that early on Christmas morning three stokers had taken the Captain's skiff away for a trip round the harbour and had managed to turn across their own wake at speed, causing it to sink. It was good to see that, as part of their punishment, they had to spend all day scrubbing the silt out from inside that skimming dish once it had been refloated and returned to its chocks on the boat deck. For once the boys had nothing to do with it and had no part of the scrubbing.

Then, with Christmas out of the way, very soon it was pay day again and then New year.

There were no New Year celebrations to talk of aboard which, in all probability, saved the boys from being forgotten yet again but the very next day, January 2, which was a Sunday, they were in great demand when everyone turned out to wash and paint the funnels and the upper deck superstructure and bring stores aboard. That chore was completed just in time because a storm blew up the following day with such ferocity that it was too rough even for the motorboat to return to the ship until the storm had abated.

Then it was nearly time to leave and having brought aboard 200 sacks of potatoes, plus 20 more of cabbages and 20 of turnips and finding suitable storage for them in every available space on the upper deck, it was time to go. The following morning, January 7, just before 1000 they slipped out of the Ireland Island (Malabar) breakwater, with the Admiral on board and made tracks for Nassau, in the Bahamas – their first port of call on their South American cruise.

The Admiral, Sir John Stevens, in his role as Deputy Supreme Commander Atlantic, was based in Bermuda. He would travel with the ship and be onboard throughout the South American cruise. Admiral Stevens had been dubbed 'Alec Guinness' by the Bermuda newspapers, due to his uncanny resemblance to the English actor.

The storm that had hit them in the dockyard a few days earlier had drifted out in to the open sea and then lain in wait for them.

They left for sea just prior to dinner-time and as soon as dinner was over and done with the call for action station drill was made and joint exercises with the rest of the squadron started, and then for half an hour or so they endured six-inch and pom-pom firings. All the time the sea was getting angrier and angrier and doing its upmost to disrupt their every move. Eventually the sea won and the remainder of the exercise was cancelled.

Luckily the boys were not involved with the heavy turret firings or the pom-poms for that matter but the sea didn't differentiate between those busy with the guns and those not. It was intent upon everyone receiving a complete drenching and even took its spite out on one of the seaboats, which it managed to smash to pieces. But despite the towering walls of water that threatened to drop down and swamp them at any moment, no one was lost overboard and after a most decidedly uncomfortable long weekend at sea they anchored off Nassau about 0900 on Monday.

Nassau, they were soon to learn, was geared up for the tourist market and not for lowly and poorly paid matelots who, in spite of their extra money, courtesy of the overseas allowance, were still not far from destitute in the eyes of those that were soon dubbed *Rich Whites.* Everything was against them. Nassau was far too expensive and, for those that decided upon a run ashore anyway, there was an awful long liberty boat ride to endure through stormy seas.

'Superb' Rides 'Rage at Bar'

150 Sailors Marooned Ashore by High Winds

Dundas Civic Centre was quickly converted into a temporary naval barracks Thursday night to house more than half of the 150 officers and ratings from HMS "Superb" who were stranded in Nassau overnight by high seas.

The remainder of the group were taken in by a score of residents.

Heavy waves, whipped up by a strong northwesterly wind, raged across the bar all afternoon and night, cutting the sailors off from their ship.

The cruiser's three launches were wind-bound at Prince George Dock from 1 p.m. Thursday.

Around 4 p.m,. with the waves still boiling outside the bar, government officials and local citizens teamed together to make a city-wide search to find accomodation for the stranded seamen.

Heading the hunt were F. M. Noad, Deputy Colonial Secretary; S/L Pete Gardner, ADC to the Governor, and Mrs. Ormond H. Curry, a member of the Entertainment Committee for Naval Personel.

Nassau residents took the sailors in by ones, twos, threes and fours until almost half of

(See 150 Sailors, Page 12)

150 Sailors

Continued from Page 1

the group was taken care of.

Dundas Civic Centre, normally used as a training school for domestic and hotel workers, was turned into a temporary barracks for the remainder.

The seamen were taken there by bus from Rawson Square and were supplied blankets by the Bahamas General Hospital and the Police Department.

A bus was scheduled to pick the sailors up at the Centre and return them to Rawson Square where they will report for further orders.

Early Thursday night the "Superb" dropped a second anchor to hold to its anchorage when the single "hook" began to drag under the tug from the tossing ship.

The historic "Tatto" by the ceremonial Guard Drums and Band of the Royal Marines, which was scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday at Clifford Park, was cancelled because of the weather.

Although at anchor, the sea was still chucking them about all over the place with the ship and those on board being tossed about and rolling heavily like the proverbial cork. The booms that the boats were secured to stuck out at ninety degrees from the ship's side and were something like eight feet clear of the water but even they were dipping down and going under water with each roll of the ship, such was the ferocity of the sea. Ginger recalled his excursion as boats crew while he was still on the Implacable and he thanked his lucky stars that he wasn't involved now and having to negotiate that boom under such conditions.

INDEX

Towards the end of the week things on board had not improved and they were happy to learn that sense had prevailed and they weighted anchor and sailed for slightly calmer waters around the other side of the island.

That was good news for those on board but it was even better for news for those who had gone ashore because, with the ship on the move and the storm returning for a second fight, those ashore were stranded. Their good news was that they were to receive an extra payment whilst they were stranded, to help them with their 'survival' and, as they found sanctuary with those *Rich Whites*, who turned up in their droves to befriend them once their plight was known, courtesy of the local radio station, most didn't have to spend any money anyway. Those ashore, which totaled around 180, never had it so good. They had extra money to help them overcome their night of hardship, a coach to transport them across the island to the ship's new resting place the next afternoon and then it was insisted upon that they accept further extra money when they returned on board. 'Hard Layers' money to compensate them for their discomfort.

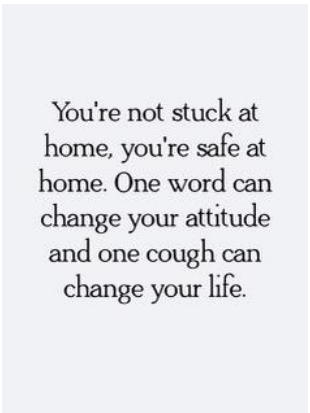
Alas! I was one of those "unfortunate" 150 sailors stranded though, I truly believe, there are worse places on earth where such a misfortune may have occurred; I truly do.

This doesn't mean that I haven't a tale of woe to tell

When "Mother" could not combat the elements which were causing the anchor cable to be dragged along the bottom, the Skipper had to order "Up Anchor" and headed the ship away from Nassau. I waved her farewell from my perch on the dockside wall. Abandoned by Mother"! Was I despondent by such an event? Not likely – I was a man-under-age and I was being given an unexpected all night leave. Though I was somewhat concerned as to how I was to survive on little more than £3 worth of Bahamian Dollars!

But no need for me to search for a local Man Friday for Commander Supply, ashore as a member of the ship's cricket team, due to play a match against a local team, put his hand in his pocket (so to speak) and gave each stranded member a hand-out. In fact, being the Superb's Banker, he had been able to get a cash loan from a local bank to give us our "hard-layers" payment. After which he addressed us on what was expected of us; basically we should fend for ourselves until 0800 the next day when we were to muster back at the dockside where we had "missed the boat".

During the time when Commodore Fuller didn't know whether he was staying or going, the local radio station put out an S.O.S. re poor stranded sailors, boo hoo! And it wasn't long after Superb departed before the first Samaritan came to the rescue.



SAILORS I HAVE KNOWN

by Brian Saunders

George Gevaux-Ross was the Blacksmith on the Superb during the 1954-55 America & West Indies cruise and in 1996, long after he retired, won just over one million pounds in the National Lottery.

On board George was a character who participated in anything and everything in the way of social events during that voyage. You would find him involved in being a pirate on numerous occasions when it came to entertaining children,

He was, with me, part of the Ship's Concert Party and performed an hilarious two-man sketch, "Dinner for One", with the producer of the show, Lieutenant Richard Ince.

Subsequent to him entering Civvy Street he moved to East Sussex and lived in a caravan the following appeared in a local newspaper after his Lottery win.

NOT all Lottery winners hanker after a mansion of their own. George Gevaux-Ross, for example.

The down-to-earth pensioner wanted a new home all right - not surprising, as he was living in a caravan. But when he splashed out, it was on - another caravan!

No up-market move to some leafy, luxury site for George and his wife Joan either. Their gleaming new £27,000 model sits proudly in the same holiday park in Hastings, East Sussex, where they've lived for the past eight years.

The former Royal Navy blacksmith is delighted with his buy.

The run-down £11,000 mobile home he used to live in can't compete with his new investment, which boasts under floor heating, double glazing and mod cons George hardly dared dream of before his numbers came up.

INDEX

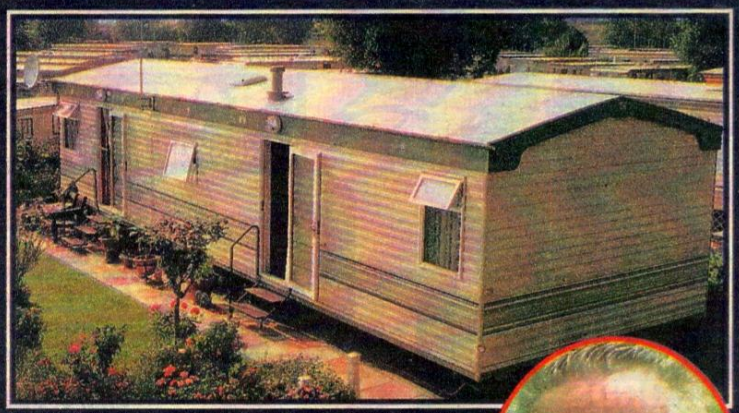
He has seized the chance to indulge in a few other luxuries. Satellite television is piped

into his new home and he has tarted up his small garden with an ornamental waterfall. Others may plan world cruises, but George makes it clear he's staying put.

"My Lottery win has given me all I wanted," he says," a new caravan and a new pipe. "It might not seem much to a lot of people, but that's all I yearned for."People ask me why I don't buy a big fancy house, but we are fine the way we are."

His face breaks into a beam: "The new caravan is a cracker - it's nine feet longer than the old one!"

JACKPOT GEORGE MOVES INTO HIS MOBILE MANSION



LUXURY: New home has mod cons Pictures: BILL ROWNTREE

By LENNY LOTTERY

LOTTERY millionaire George Gevaux-Ross has quit his rundown mobile home – and splashed out on a luxury version.

The down-to-earth grandad spent just £27,000 of his £1.1million winnings on the brand new home.

It is on exactly the same spot as his former caravan at the holiday park where he has lived with wife Joan for seven years.

And he paid just £17.99 to fulfil his other great ambition — a new Meerschaum pipe.

George, 71, said: "My win has given me everything I wanted.

"It might not seem much to a lot of folk but that's all I yearned for.

"I'm perfectly happy with my life since becoming a millionaire but I was happy before.

"People say 'Why don't you buy a big fancy house?' but we are all right the way we are.

"We're not the sort to splash out on big houses and cars. I don't really know how much I've got. All the money is tied up in special accounts."

It's all I want - £1.1m lotto dad

The dad-of-six beamed with pride as he said: "This new caravan is a cracker. It's 9ft longer than the old one!"

Pleasure

His new mobile home also has underfloor heating, double-glazing and a host of mod cons.

Ex-Navy blacksmith George added a couple of other luxuries after his win in May 1996: satellite TV and an ornamental waterfall in the tiny garden. And he took Joan on a cruise.

A pal at the Combe Haven Holiday Park, Hastings, East Sussex, said: "George is a one-off. He isn't interested in the money.

"He is worth more now than when he won because he hasn't even spent as much as has mounted up in interest.

"He just takes enormous pleasure in simple things — walking his dog, smoking his pipe and sitting outside on a sunny day.

"The thing that makes him happiest is knowing that his family will be well provided for.

"Most people envied him before his win because he was so happy with his lot in life."

HAPPY: Pipe-smoker George

From "The Mirror" 13-9-97.

George Gevaux-Ross 2nd fromLeft, Brian Keeler extreme right

Thanks go to Shipmate Ray Lambert for supplying the photos from his archives

INDEX

12 YEARS ON (AND UNDER) THE WAVES – Part 2

by Wiggy Bennett

During the time I was on the "Super B" I moved from being a Boy Telegraphist to Ordinary Telegraphist to Telegraphist. In our mess there were quite a few old timers, all ready to give us young "sprogs" the benefit of their wisdom as to what we youngsters should do when the ship came to the end of this commission. Whilst returning to Chatham in December 1955 I had to fill in a form giving a preference for my next posting. Because of the information I had gleaned from the old timers I requested to be sent to Coastal Forces (motor torpedo or motor gunboats) as these only had one radio operator on them (you would therefore be king of the castle!).

February 1956 saw me and the rest of the crew going into the Naval Barracks at Chatham. A month later I found myself in the Drafting Office being told I was to report to ***HMS Dolphin.*** "Where's that?" I asked. "Gosport" the drafting clerk replied. "Oh good, is that Coastal Forces?" said I. "No lad, it's submarines, get your kit packed and report there on the 2nd March". To say I was apprehensive would be an understatement. For my 18th birthday my Uncle

Pat had sent me a book entitled "The Admiralty Regrets". It was the story of the submarine "***Thetis***" which sank in Liverpool Bay whilst undergoing builder's trials, the builders being Cammell Lairds in Birkenhead. A painter had covered over a vent on a torpedo tube that was used to check whether any water was present in the tube before opening the rear door. Also the indicator that showed whether the bow door of the tube was open or shut had been connected the wrong way round. I'll leave the rest of it to your imagination.

The most notable thing about "Dolphin" is the 140 foot tower which is the Submarine Escape Training Tank, we'll mention that later. "Dolphin" is housed in an old fortification known as Fort Blockhouse. It has been home to the submarine service since the early 1900's. It is said that submarines were sent to that location as they were then out of the way, the top brass did not like them – they were dirty, un-naval like and their batteries were prone to catch fire.

The training for submarines lasted for 6 weeks, during that time you learnt about all the workings of the boat and what made them tick! Classroom training was supplemented with visits to an old boat in the base. Basically you were learning where all the pipes went, what was in

them, what the various valves and vents did. If, when at sea, something had to be done and you were the only person in the vicinity, you did it! The only area where you did not receive hands-on training was the engine room.

Towards the end of the course you did the escape training. Prior to 1954 training in submarine escape had been carried out in a 15 foot deep tank, you put on breathing apparatus and entered the tank from the top, sank to the bottom, floated to the surface and then carried out the drill required to operate the breathing apparatus. Not very realistic! In the late 40's a committee was set up to look into training for escaping from a sunken submarine.

They came up with the idea of a cylindrical tank, 100 feet high and 18 foot in diameter containing 182,155 gallons of warm water (33 to 35 degrees C). There were 3 escape compartments, 2 on the side at 30 and 60 feet and one at the bottom that replicated the inside of a submarine. You were required to do two escapes from 30 foot, one from 60 and the final one from the mock-up at 100 feet. The procedure for escaping was as follows – you take a deep breath, leave the compartment and float to the surface breathing out all the time. You are aided in your trip to the surface by a lifejacket. The final escape is realistic in that you are breathing compressed air while the compartment is flooded; this enables the hatch to be opened against the weight of the water on top. It takes 14 seconds to reach the surface; if you don't breath out quickly enough you get a punch in the stomach by one of the "swim boys" who are floating around at various depths to make sure you reach the surface safely. Once out of the water at the top you are required to stand still for 4 minutes, this is to ensure that you do not have an embolism developing in your bloodstream. Should you look unwell you are whisked into the decompression chamber, where you'll stay for 24 hours.

In May 1956 I passed the submarine course and started to receive submarine pay. This also coincided with the navy receiving a large pay rise in general, my pay virtually doubled overnight. On the 17 May I made my way to join the 3rd Submarine Squadron based at that time in Rothesay Bay, Isle of Bute, with the depot ship ***HMS Adamant*** as 'mother' The 27th July saw me join my first boat – ***Anchorite***. It was now that I found out why I had been drafted to submarines, I joined her not as a Telegraphist but as the Signalman! The

HM Submarine Anchorite

navy found itself
short of signalmen during the Suez crisis and all signalmen had been withdrawn from submarines to fill the gap! The Admiralty reasoned that as Telegraphists could read Morse by flashing lamp there was no need for a signalman.

Although I was only on the Anchorite for 3 months quite a lot happened in that time. On one occasion we had been tasked with being an enemy submarine operating in the Irish Sea and the Atlantic north of Northern Ireland. Creeping along at a depth of 100 feet in the Irish Sea suddenly there was a scrapping noise along the port side and we started to list to starboard. Coming to periscope depth we reversed our course and retraced our steps with the echo sounder running – the trace showed that we had found a pinnacle of rock that was not shown on the chart. Later in that exercise, during darkness, we were snorkelling to recharge the batteries. The captain had decided that to stop the searching Shackelton aircraft from picking up the snort mast on its radar we would steam up and down the Irish coast, the echo from the cliffs would mask our mast.

Suddenly (again!) we ran aground. Coming to the surface the call came for the signalman to report to the bridge with the signal lantern. I was told to shine the light to port, there for all to see were the cliffs of the Malin peninsula. It would appear that the Navigating officer had got his tide tables wrong! Eventually the exercise concluded and we made our way back to Rothesay Bay. The entrance to the bay is shown by 2 buoys, you go through the middle. Not Anchorite, the buoy that should have been left to port was left to starboard and we went aground again! It was late at night and the tide was ebbing, so we were there until the next morning. Just prior to running aground I had been signalling the depot ship with my light, at the courts martial the Navigator pleaded that he had been blinded by the lantern and failed to see the buoy. (It's always the junior's fault!)

Whilst researching this narrative I discovered that Anchorite found another uncharted rock while dived off Auckland, New Zealand (by hitting it, of course!). It is now shown on the chart as Anchorite Rock!

I also learnt about the easy going nature of discipline on the boats. On leaving harbour you go into passage routine, now you can wear whatever you like in the way of clothing, my favourite attire being check shirt, jean type trousers and the submarine sweater if it was cold. In the tropics it was not unusual to wear only a towel around your waist. This relaxation of discipline was clearly shown when I reached a more senior rate. In the 50's and 60's it was the rule for Scottish pubs to be shut on Sundays; to qualify for a drink in a hotel you had to be a traveller and have come a distance of more than 3 miles.

The boat that I was serving on at the time sailed from Portsmouth on a Thursday afternoon and we arrived in Campbeltown on the Sunday afternoon. After a quick wash and brush up it was off to the only hotel in Campbeltown for a drink. Imagine our surprise when the bartender refused to serve us – we did not qualify as travellers as we had only come 300 yards from the jetty! In his mind the 500 odd miles from Portsmouth did not count! Not to be defeated 5 of us decided to walk the 5 miles to Machrihanish. When it started to get dark we abandoned the idea and made our way back to Campbeltown. When we got close to the boat we met the Captain who was out for a walk. After exchanging greetings (in the correct manner, of course) he asked what we were doing and when told about the incident in the hotel his reply was "Let's get back on-board and I'll have the wardroom bar opened!" That is something that would not happen on the surface ships.

It was while I was on Anchorite that I became acquainted with the Northern Ireland routine. If, at the end of the week's exercises, you were scheduled to continue in the same area the next week you would put into Londonderry for the weekend. The accommodation in Derry was provided by a converted Tank Landing Ship, very basic but it was better than living on board the boat. When in harbour there is always posted a 'trot sentry', a sort of caretaker. At night he is responsible for the safety of the boat and carries out an inspection every hour, checking that no water is coming in and no fires are developing. When in Irish waters the trot sentry is issued with a Sten gun and 30 rounds of ammunition, the gangplank is removed from the boat and all hatches except the conning tower are shut and clipped, the theory being that he will repel any Irish militant boarders. If you arrived at the mouth of Loch Foyle late on a Saturday, too late to navigate the narrow river, you would secure to a buoy at Magilligan Point but the trot sentry would still be armed.

If you'd like to watch a video on submarine escape training please click on the photograph

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

BACK IN 1956 Part 9

THE KANDY PERAHERA

The Kandy Esala Perahera is held annually in July to August. Its origin is lost in the mist of centuries, but there are several theories. First of these theories was the cessation of the war between the gods, which ended on the day the new moon of July and was celebrated by a perahera (procession) and a vow taken with the use of the Esala tree (Indian Laburnum). A second theory is associated with the great victory of King Vankanasika, who, against the Indian King of Chola, avenged and insult, and captured 24,000 prisoners, all this in the year 600 B.C.. Lastly there is the theory that the ceremony was connected with the Indian festival known as the 'Asalhi Games'. However, it is not of much consequence which theory is correct, for the present mode of ceremony, procession and festival began in 1775 A.D. when King Kirth Sri Rajassingha decreed that the Dalada relic of the Buddha was to be carried in processi9n with the insignia of the four Dewales (four outer temples) and followed by the custodians of the Sacred Tooth, the High Priests of Malwatti and Asgirya-similar to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in the Church of England. Tradition has it the relic reached Kandy hidden in the coils of the hair of a princess who fled to Ceylon.

For five nights processions with flag, drum and torch are made around the 'Esala Tree' within the precincts of each Dewale. The sixth night starts the Kumbal Perahera, deriving its name from the anthill-like mound of clay which supports the Esala Tree. On this night the processions for Dewales are joined b y that of the Dalada Maligawa. The Temple Chiefs wear their full white Kandian Dress and are led by their retainers of dancers, musicians and drummers. After five such nights the stage is reached known as the Randoli Perahera, which is held for a future five nights. It was traditional for the Kandian Royalty to pay their respects and take part in these last Peraheras of the Esala Festival. Today these processions get grander and larger each night, elephants, dancers and musicians being added.

It was to see the fourth of these Randoli Peraheras that a small party form the ship made a day trip from Trincomalee. The early morning was bright and sunny as we travelled through mile after mile of monotonous jungle, which later, as we climbed towards the central mountains in which Kandy nestles, changes to rubber and coconut plantations on the slopes with the lush green paddy fields, terraced on the narrow and steep-sided valleys.

Kandy was reached in time for a late lunch, the manager of the Queen's Hotel, Pat O'Shaughnessy, welcoming us, and endeavouring to make our view of the Perahera more comfortable by giving us the balcony on the second floor corner room. After lunch we were out among the gay milling throng, who, despite the rain showers which were becoming frequent, were not dampened from their Bank Holiday mood. Itinerant traders selling sweets, crackers, banners and streamers jostled shoulder to shoulder with shaven headed and yellow-robed Buddhist monks. Along the ancient wall surrounding the Temple of the Tooth, many elephants stood shackled, eating their afternoon meal of leaves and sap=laden wood, which they split with their hooves and tore with their trunks, awaiting the time to be capriconed in their brilliant trappings.

Towards twilight an expectant air hung over Kandy, the throng taking up positions of vantage along the route. By the time we had eaten dinner and decided we would watch from the roadside, the route was lined several deep. However, by judicial leaning and pushing of the crowd, which was extremely passive and good mannered, we found ourselves on the kerb with the processional route directly in front of us. Exactly on 8 o'clock a single gun was fired from the Temple, which was the signal for the Perahera to move off. As we were near the Temple, it was not long before the head of the procession came in view.

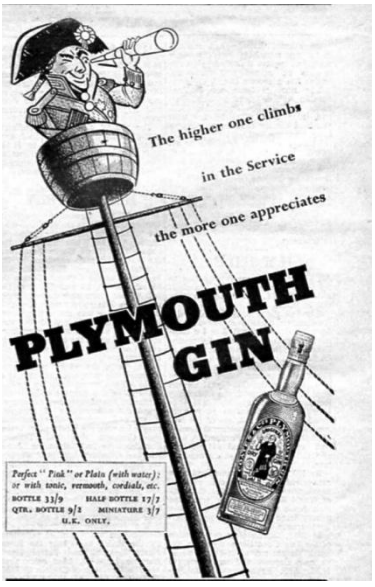
First came the Dalada Maligawa Perahera, which comprised of some fifty whip crackers, who at set times cleared the way and announced the procession by all simultaneously cracking their sliver-handled whips. Following these whip crackers came the flag-bearers walking sedately down the centre of the road, whilst on the flanks of the whole procession were torch-bearers. Following the flag-bearers came the first elephant on which sat the Peramunerala (official holding the mandate giving permission for the Perahera to be held). In his hands was the silver

scroll. He was followed by some fifty drummers and flutes, who in turn preceded the Gajanaka Nilame (head of the Royal elephants) riding a magnificent tusker. He was followed by more elephants, drummers and Kandian dancers in their frilled trousers, silver helmets and breast pieces. The torches glinting on these silver ornaments and the shrill trill of the flutes, and the steady rhythm of the drummers, transported one out of everyday life to the mediaeval period. The whole affair was bigger, stranger and more weird than anything Bertram Mills could ever hope to devise or produce.

In this state of seeming suspension between the present and the past, comes the highlight of the procession, the Maligawe Tusker, carrying the Golden Casket containing the Sacred Relics. A canopy is held over the tusker, which is covered with brilliant trappings on which rests the palanquim containing the casket, whilst the great beast treads on a white cloth spread before it. As this part of the procession passes all stand respectfully silent, be they Buddhist or Christian. Following the Tusker come two lanes of dancers facing each other with drummers in the centre, who precede the Diyawadana Nilame, head of the Temple in all its Oriental splendour, attended by bearers and Temple officials.

The whole procession takes over an hour and a half to go by at a steady walking pace. Altogether I counted some ninety-six elephants.

With its brilliant colours, its richness and historical and religious background, it was an event that will remain vividly in our memories of Ceylon.



INDEX

PHOTO ALBUM

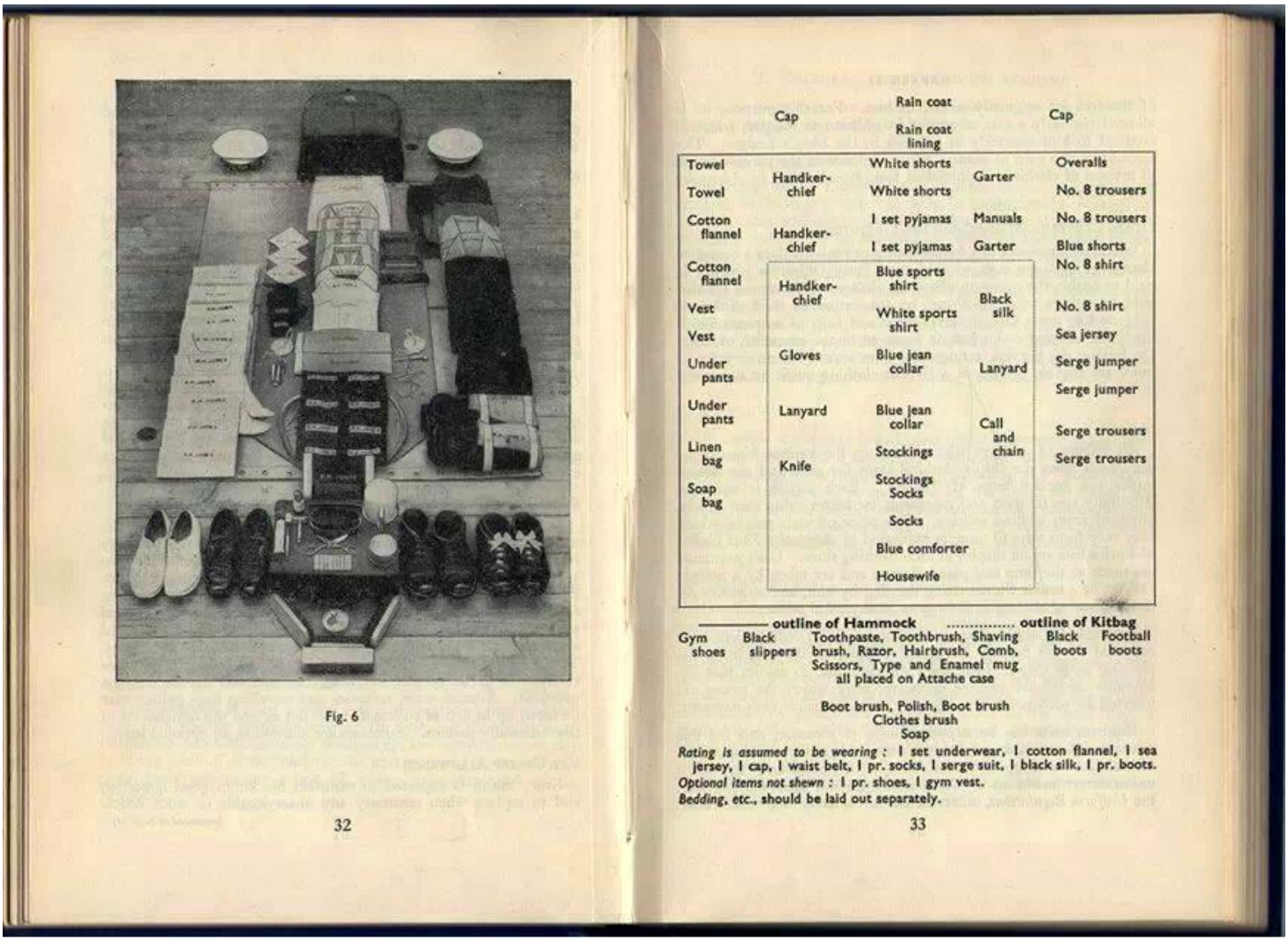


Fig. 6

32

Cap — Rain coat — Rain coat lining — Cap

Towel		White shorts	Garter	Overalls
Towel	Handker-chief	White shorts		No. 8 trousers
Cotton flannel		I set pyjamas	Manuals	No. 8 trousers
	Handker-chief	I set pyjamas	Garter	Blue shorts
Cotton flannel		Blue sports shirt		No. 8 shirt
	Handker-chief		Black silk	
Vest		White sports shirt		No. 8 shirt
Vest				Sea jersey
	Gloves	Blue jean collar	Lanyard	Serge jumper
Under pants				Serge jumper
	Lanyard	Blue jean collar	Call and chain	
Under pants				Serge trousers
Linen bag		Stockings		Serge trousers
	Knife	Stockings		
Soap bag		Socks		
		Socks		
		Blue comforter		
		Housewife		

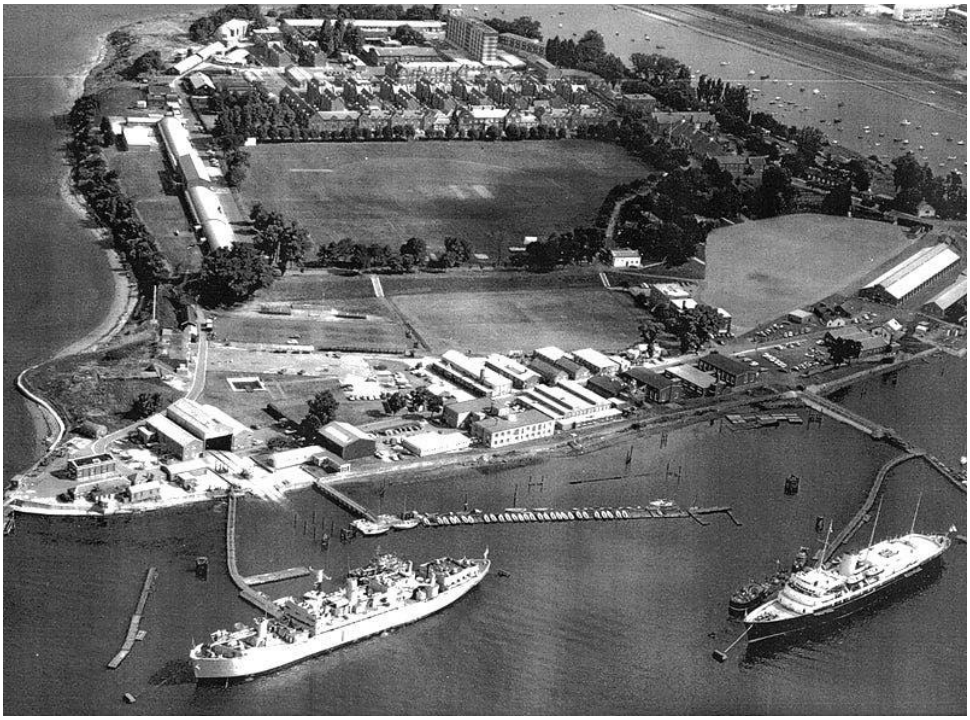
——— outline of Hammock ..... outline of Kitbag

Gym shoes — Black slippers — Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Shaving brush, Razor, Hairbrush, Comb, Scissors, Type and Enamel mug all placed on Attache case — Black boots — Football boots

Boot brush, Polish, Boot brush
Clothes brush
Soap

Rating is assumed to be wearing : 1 set underwear, 1 cotton flannel, 1 sea jersey, 1 cap, 1 waist belt, 1 pr. socks, 1 serge suit, 1 black silk, 1 pr. boots.
Optional items not shewn : 1 pr. shoes, 1 gym vest.
Bedding, etc., should be laid out separately.

33



Whale Island showing our sister ship HMS Sheffield (C 24) & (I think) the S.S Mull of Galloway.

INDEX

CROSSED THE BAR

Further details of ex shipmates (but not necessarily members of the Association) who have crossed the bar can be found on the appropriate page our website.

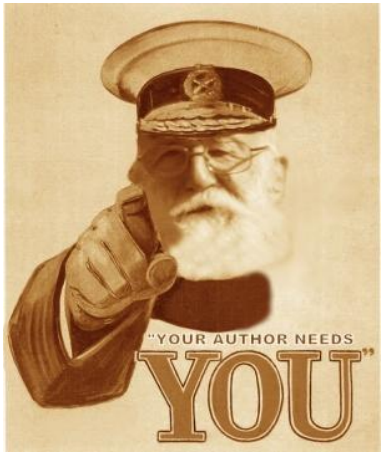
To go there please click **HERE**

Crossed the Bar (Recently Notified)

INDEX

SLOPS

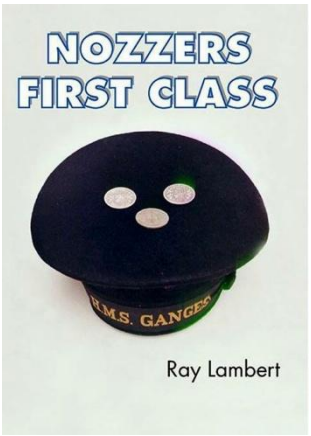
Journalist & Best Selling Author

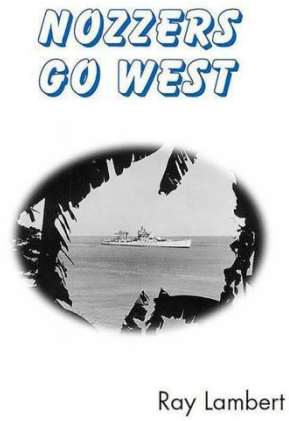


OUR IN-HOUSE **BEST SELLING AUTHOR** IS OFFERING THE FOLLOWING BOOKS AT A SPECIAL PRICE FOR MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

Ray Lambert

Follow the author when he was a handsome young man in Ganges and as he joins HMS Superb at Chatham. Go with him as he begins the "Luxury Cruise" of 1954-55. Join him from Punta Arenas to Vancouver and much in between. Learn of Guantanamo Bay and the Falklands before they became headline news. Each book costs £7.99 including UK postage. Click **HERE** for more information & to contact Ray by email

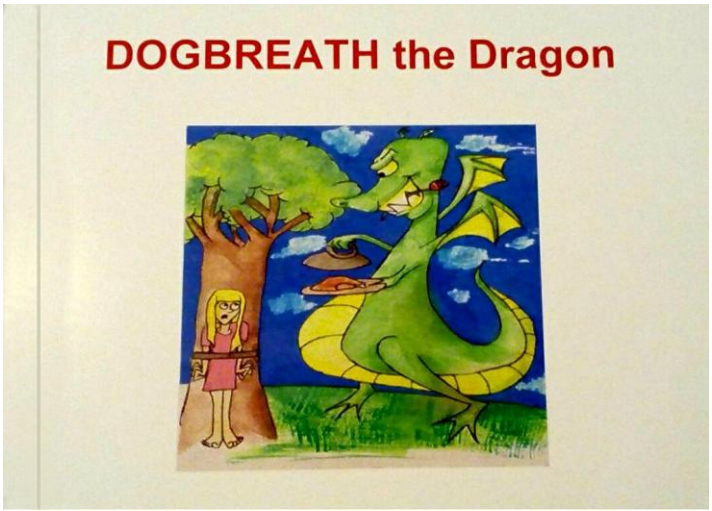




INDEX

Something for the Youngsters

Phil Grimson



Shipmate Phil Grimson offers his latest book for sale targeted at children from 8 years upward. It is a magical tale of chivalry which should enchant most youngsters and lead them into a make-believe world where

there's fierce and fiery combat when a princess is captured by a dragon.

There are bold knights charging to her rescue one of who wins her hand in marriage.

KINDLE DOWNLOAD £5.59 **PRINTED VERSION £13.99 + P&P***

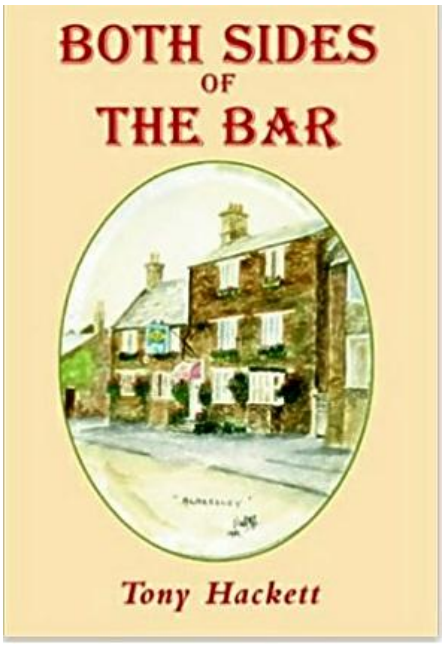
Phil can be contacted by email by clicking on this LINK

*** IF YOU CONTACT PHIL DIRECTLY YOU CAN BUY THE PAPERBACK BOOK FOR ONLY £12.50 + P&P AND PHIL WILL DONATE £1 TO THE HMS SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION FUNDS**

INDEX

Life After the Navy

Tony Hacket



Tony, the son of a police officer, joined the Royal Navy aged 15 and spent the next 10 years travelling the world. He entered Civvy street in 1959 and went into the pub trade. This book relates Tony's endeavours in balancing his life between his love of rugby, managing often run-down pubs and his love of the sea and finally his successful ownership of his own free-house.

An interesting insight into the trials and tribulations of being self employed.

Available as a hard back book from Amazon at £12.99

PEOPLE SEARCH FOR PEOPLE

If you can assist with any of these appeals please contact Brian Saunders in the first instance. No details will be passed on to third parties without express permission. These appeals will be left in the magazine for a few months

From previous issues

The son of **Jim (James) Johnstone** asks if anyone knew his father – a Royal Marine on the 1954-55 cruise

Stoker Stephen (Steve) Maddison (1946-47) and still going strong at 92 asks if anyone remembers him.

Keith (Danny) Lambert was a stoker on board the 1954-55 cruise and is looking for old oppos. Hopefully he will join the Association.

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The following message received from Derek Thompson, via Facebook
Just wondered if any of you gents knew my father **Derrick Thompson (Tommo)** he was a stoker

mechanic (E) 1st class on board HMS Superb in 1955/56. He passed away in 2003 aged 72. I myself was in the Andrew and served for 23 yrs. I would be grateful if anyone knew him

Neil Cooper, the son of Terry Willey, writes
"My late father appears to be mentioned in the booklet from the 52-53 tour of West Indies. He's stated as leading electricians mate. His full name was **Terry Keith Willey.** Be great to hear from anyone who knew him"

Derek Baldry (Killick Sparker) would like to contact Ginger Dunne from 1956

Stoker Clive Godley would like to get in touch with old shipmates - I have his telephone number and email address so if you'd like it get back to me. (BS)

Larry Boudier who was in the Chatham field gun's crew in 1955 would like to know if anyone knows of others in that crew

Eleanor Ingalls Fochesato from New Jersey, USA would like to contact John Stevens, from the 1953 cruise to Maine, USA.

Bob Butcher known to many as "Butch" & who served on Superb between Nov 1950 to July 1951 wonders if Curly Watson is still around. He would like to make contact.

Laura Kardo researching her grandfather, Charles Harris, who served around 1951 & 1952. would like to know more about him.

Jeff , the son of Jim Stewart who was on board as a Telegraphist between 1947 & 1951, would be happy to receive any information re his dad. Jim was also on HMS Vidal in 1955

Click here to contact Brian Saunders by email