H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

NOVEMBER, 2017

Nº 12

OUR SWORDS WE BARE
OUR SPIRITS DARE

CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION IS ROBIN SMITH

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Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710

ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Greetings Shipmates, the Rosyth Windbreak set off on its journey to become Portsmouth Windbreak.

Very first day at sea a press release from M.O.D. Navy announced; The crew have named their vessel Big Betty. I made an urgent call for a sedative. M.O.D. P.R dept. have been sweating this out for several years, cool dudes have conferenced in five star hotels to 'brain storm', plastic expense cards have worn thin to achieve this target, box is now ticked.

Referendums are out of favour at present, but I would like to be a 'bulk head fly' and hear what 'the crew' really think. I feel someone tries to make the R.N. look ever more ridiculous. I also wonder which lickspittle insisted on ship's official name. Don't know a nation in the world that names its flag ship after their current head of State. It avoids embarrassment from all manner of incidents.

God forbid we ever go to war and precipitate a vicious competition to be first to sink her, despite monumental risk. A Russian commentator said, 'Thanks for the new large target' (cheeky bugger).

Was interesting to see the M.O.D. considers 'super carrier' a 'prototype design'. Viewing it alongside world current launchings I say it was obsolete, at best obsolescent! Advertised in service date of 2020 put alongside its conception date surely bears that out.

Perhaps you know of U.S. Senator John McCain, he has always been against the 'super carrier' programme (at $ 13 billion a copy). He is not a hot air politician on this subject. In his previous life he enjoyed a room at the Hanoi Hilton for several years after being shot down when on a mission from a 'small carrier' during the Vietnam War.

I assume 'super carriers' are attractive to political 'bean counters' from the economy of scale point of view. To task force admiral, 'two or three for the price of one' when in harm's way must allow a degree of 'sphincter relaxation'. He has the Mariana's fight as an example.

Hundreds of planes flown by sons of Nippon with a chip on their shoulders, forced to divide their massive effort between four carriers was a classic counter measure with the desired pay back for U.S. commander. I read this week's newspaper report that Senator McCain has a 'large brain tumour'.

As a citizen who had paid his dues in full to his homeland we must all wish him well.
It makes me smile to hear 'that navy' considers a small carrier like the old Midway class (currently preserved in San Diego). A current equivalent would be the new America class assault carriers that I harped on about in a previous rant. 40 – 50 thousand U.S. tons as

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opposed to 100,000 tons and still able to operate those ultimate carrier planes 'Super Hornets'. Another subject, in a previous article, was E.M.A.L.'s electric system for catapults on Super carrier new launch *Gerald Ford*.

The failure rate of system is cause for great concern, have wracked my feeble brain but cannot remember the exact figures quoted, something like 'one in many hundreds'. Old steam system is counted in multiple thousands.

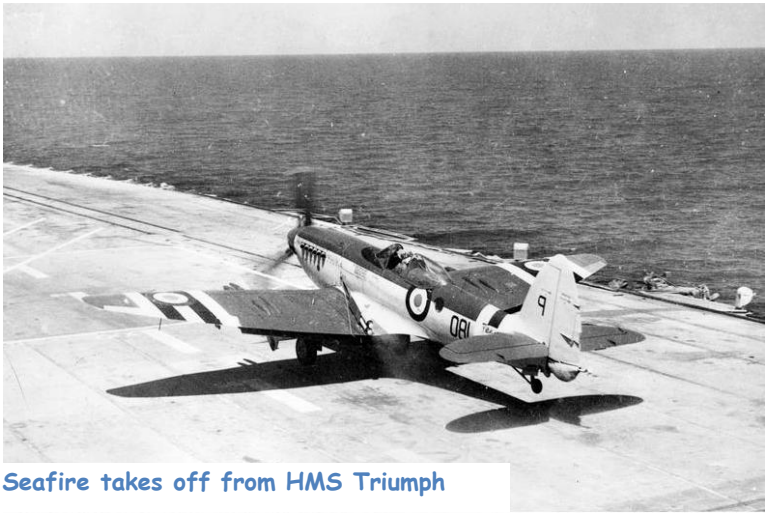
It may seem like nit picking of new kit but bear in mind the cost of Hornet at millions of dollars, then add the magic ingredient 'the driver'. Failure to launch, at any number, is a chance too far.

HMS Triumph entering Grand Harbour, Malta

To stop the use of a system whilst on trials is prudent. Knowing the contractors pedigree they will kick this problem to Hades and back to find the solution.

Early on I was a 'boy' on *Triumph*, one of two light carriers (11,000 tons) in the Med. Fleet, the other was *Ocean*. Following a day's flying the easy, no fuss end to a day's proceedings was to drop anchor in Marsaxlokk, Malta.

On one occasion a static catapult launch, anchored into the wind, was conducted. The shuttle stopped for some reason half way up the track. The aircraft rolled over the bow and sank. A diver located the pilot out of his seat but caught in his harness. This is the sort of accident that sickens one to contemplate. I cannot recall the aircraft type, but near certain was a *Seafire 14*. Somewhere there must be a record of such events.



Seafire takes off from HMS Triumph

A particularly theatrical catapult launch was made by *Triumph* in grand Harbour immediately following slipping our buoys – 8 and 8A right up to the top of the creek. Only buoys beyond us was Mountbatten's *Sheffield*; he was C.S.I.
The second *Seafire* was off as the breakwater was passed. To see this from the top of Barrakka Gardens lift must have been a jaw dropper.

Merlin engines with throttles at the gate at about 40 foot, noise enclosed by high buildings.

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Again, I feel a photographic record must be tucked away somewhere; would love to see it!1

'There you go', a brief trawl through my opinions and memories. You can wager your best pair of Harrods's pink "Y fronts".

Health and Safety executive would hold a mass Hari-kari if such a demonstration was mooted today – Navy flyers did that – not R.A.F !!

That's it folks. If you cannot catch a bird of paradise better a wet hen than nowt, or nuffin, as they say down here.

Tatty Bye, be joyful eh!

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Royal Navy sent just one (casualty) ship showpiece to sea and air event

The Royal Navy is so overstretched it was represented by just one ship at what has traditionally been its biggest festival of the year.

Operational "pressures" meant the crowds at September's Bournemouth Air Festival gazed out onto only *RFA Argus*, a casualty ship belonging to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

***RFA Argus* represented the Navy at the Bournemouth Air Festival**

The lone appearance was in contrast to last year's festival where the Navy sent a flotilla of three vessels - a frigate, a patrol ship and a mine hunter.

But in September the largest of those ships, the Type 23 *HMS Monmouth*, was busy disrupting drug smugglers in the Indian Ocean, part of a hectic programme of operations or refits that has left the fleet with virtually no vessels to spare.

The late summer festival is the Navy's biggest single civilian engagement event of the calendar and is considered a valuable opportunity for recruitment.

"Due to operational and in-year resource pressures, we had a slight change in the number of ships appearing in the bay," Commodore Jamie Miller, who oversaw the festival.

HMS Monmouth was hunting drug smugglers

The Royal Navy is still basking in the glory of the arrival of the first of its new state-of-the-art aircraft carriers *HMS Queen Elizabeth.*

But overall the Navy's operational capacity has been

described by MPs as "woefully low", with the number of frigates and destroyers in particular "way below" the number needed to adequately respond to future threats.

A range of obligations including thwarting the drugs trade, securing the Falklands and showing solidarity with NATO allies in the face of Russian aggression has left the fleet stretched.

Over the past months a force led by *HMS Monmouth* has seized roughly £400 million worth of illegal drugs in the Gulf and Indian Ocean from eight separate raids.

Meanwhile *HMS Ocean*, a helicopter carrier and the Navy's current flagship, is leading a NATO maritime group protecting trade routes in the Mediterranean.

HMS Duncan, one of six new Type 45 destroyers, is leading a NATO task force in the Black Sea, and other vessels are currently deployed in the Caribbean, South Atlantic and in waters around Britain.

"Fortunately the largest and highest profile vessel, the *RFA Argus*, represented the Royal Navy and played host to a number of cadet and youth acquaints, formed the backdrop to the Royal Marines beach demonstration, and acted as a landing platform for the Merlin helicopter," said Commodore Miller.

HMS Duncan

"As is the Royal Marines motto, we have had to adapt and overcome this change, and we are delighted to have supported the air festival with Royal Marine Band of *HMS Collingwood* who performed a band concert, beating retreats, unarmed combat displays by the commando recruiting troop, the weapons displays at the naval village and a beach demonstration by Viking armoured fighting vehicles, Merlin helicopter and Hawk fast jets."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Just read the latest magazine I wonder how 'Lofty' (and others) manage to remember all those names and dates. **(Lofty is a very intelligent person with a sharp mind, not sure about the others ! - Ed)**

I recall that Liberian Minister **(October article by Commander David Repard)** but didn't know he, and his entourage, kept the ship waiting while they went shopping.

I remember when he finally came aboard it was pouring with rain and he stood on the inboard end of the gangway while the band (who were undercover of an awning) played the Liberian and English anthems, so naturally, we the gangway staff had to stand out as well!
Ray Lambert

Merci beaucoup for the magazine Brian.

Stan Townsend

Dear Brian. Couldn't help thinking how valuable this periodical is from an historical viewpoint.
Thank you once again for this monthly treat.
Sorry to report since last writing have had another week in hospital.
Ted Davy
(We wish you well Ted - Brian)

Hello Brian,
My granddad **(John Eccleston)** has asked me to email you and for me to send his apologies that he never made the reunion. He has been unwell again. Hopefully we will make the next one.
Regards
Melissa Kingham

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REUNION REPORT & PHOTOS

Probably one of the best reunions inasmuch there were more people attending this year which resulted in a lot of laughter and singing. The latter as a result of the live entertainment supplied by Cheryl King, a talented solo artist, who provided a pleasant variety of songs throughout the evening which concluded just before midnight.

Several of our shipmates returned to the fold this year and it was a real pleasure to see them despite many of us racking our brains to remember historical anecdotes. For my part it was a revelation to realise that one member and I were in the same mess at the same time despite having been corresponding over some months !

The witticisms and *sotto voce* comments were manifold from Messrs Brierley, Lambert & Ward with additional material from Neville Howe's' son, Philip.

Raffle prizes were numerous and generously provided by members with one particular table seemingly having sold their souls and garnering the greater part of the prizes. Perhaps it was why one of the diners rejoices in the name of Sharky.

However, the evening's main prize, an oil painting of the clipper *Thermopylae*, unsurprisingly was won (again) by Libby Saunders who happened to be sitting at the same table as the artist Brian Turner. Some unkindly say that is why we travel up from France by car instead of flying, in order to save the expense of paying for a luggage check-in on the aeroplane.

Brian Turner generously donates a sample of his art each year and this one item generates a considerable amount to the Association's funds allowing for expenditure on things such as the entertainment.

Of course the logistics of the reunion are left in the capable hands of our Chairman, Robin Smith, and his family who rally round and support him. So our thanks go to Caroline, Denise and their families for their continued help.

Brian Saunders

MORE PHOTOS CAN BE SEEN ON THE WEBSITE BY CLICKING **HERE**

Reunion Saturday October 6th 2017 reported by Andy Brierley

A jolly success, gathering high points out of ten. Robin's girls pushing things along, ticket selling and prize distribution, their chosen solo singer, a lady with unbroken string of those tunes we all know. Her opening comment was to say the selection would be soft and gentle allowing civilised conversation – and so it was. To be freed of the pestilence of shouted conversation made for a long and pleasant evening. Most venues one visits of late equate volume with quality. I am of the opinion it kills conversation, the reason folks gather. I've a feeling we may be seeing the lady again.

Brian Turner's donated painting for the raffle really twanged my thong. I had held the view his finest effort was steam/sail ship 'Gannet under sail'. Seeing his gift to us this year; Barque against the coast with Chinese junks in the foreground pips it to first place. As a picture addict Jo and I bought a bunch of tickets, prepared to be on bread and water till next month's pension comes in. Libby Saunders bought a shed load. To see her wet a finger to separate the winning ticket was akin to a kick in the 'danglies'. With absolutely no malice of forethought I told myself, in Latin, 'The lucky bitch has won it again' I was forced to shuffle off to the gentlemen's for a piercing scream, in private.

Going to the dining room earlier was beneficial, allowing all to get sorted out rapidly. The lounge is not configured to cope with us in a like manner. Am of the opinion, service lacked the presence of the usual 'maître d''. Am certain you know I refer to the small man, slight build, always greets with a smile, anxious to bustle about sorting seat preferences etc.. I heard his absence commented on by two or three people.

Was uplifted to see a couple of new faces, happy smiling faces, amongst the regulars. That mainly due to the combined efforts of Brian and Libby Saunders, via the web site. The rumour we are expiring on our feet thus proved false.

For effort in that area I awarded Brian an O.B.E earlier in the year – and he wore it with pride!

A small meeting of army boys opposite, in the lounge, were heard commenting on it. Jo wet herself hearing one fellow say he did not realise said 'decoration' was that large. Honestly, those 'brown jobs' are not very worldly.

The old saying proved right, 'class will out'. I hope our website continues to thrive; a 'jack stay' for those ancient Super B's who don't manage to visit the King Charles for many reasons.

I sat next to Ray Lambert during dinner. He of the luxuriant white beard; got to know him much better.

Did pay particular attention and can report, without fear or favour, said beard does not contain any livestock.

That's my personal view of the reunion, in a nutshell. To those who showed me friendship after these long years be aware of my gratitude.

I feel an absolute cockroach at being unable to bring up the name of 'Scots lad with specs' who gave me a history book on Sheerness Dockyard, a place I've been bumping up against over many years. Your face is rock solid; name will come back whilst I'm doing my light dusting on the morrow.

It was splendid news to hear our shipmate George Messmer and family, in Florida, had been treated lightly by the recent tornado that devastated his part of the world.

I hope the rest of the year treats you all in such a mellow manner.

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SCRAN BAG (FREE ADVERTISING)

PSST ! NO, HE ISN'T YET BUT

Ray Lambert has lowered

his prices for Christmas !

To remind you of how it was when we had wooden ships and iron men (well almost!)

AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE MATURE MAN

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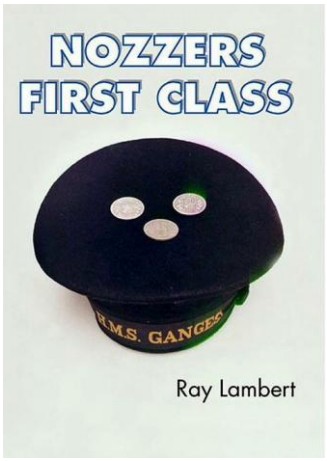

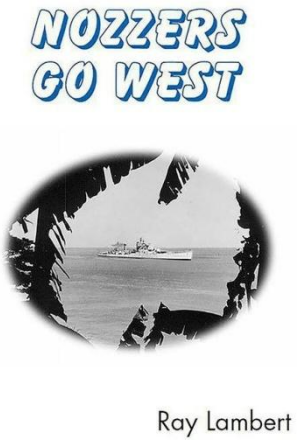

Follow the author when he was a handsome young man in Ganges and as he joins HMS Superb at Chatham. Go with him as he begins the "Luxury Cruise" of 1954-55. Join him from Punta Arenas to Vancouver and much in between. Learn of Guantanamo Bay and the Falklands before they became headline news.

Each book normally costs £7.95 including UK postage. For more information contact Ray by email Click here to **contact Ray** **by email**

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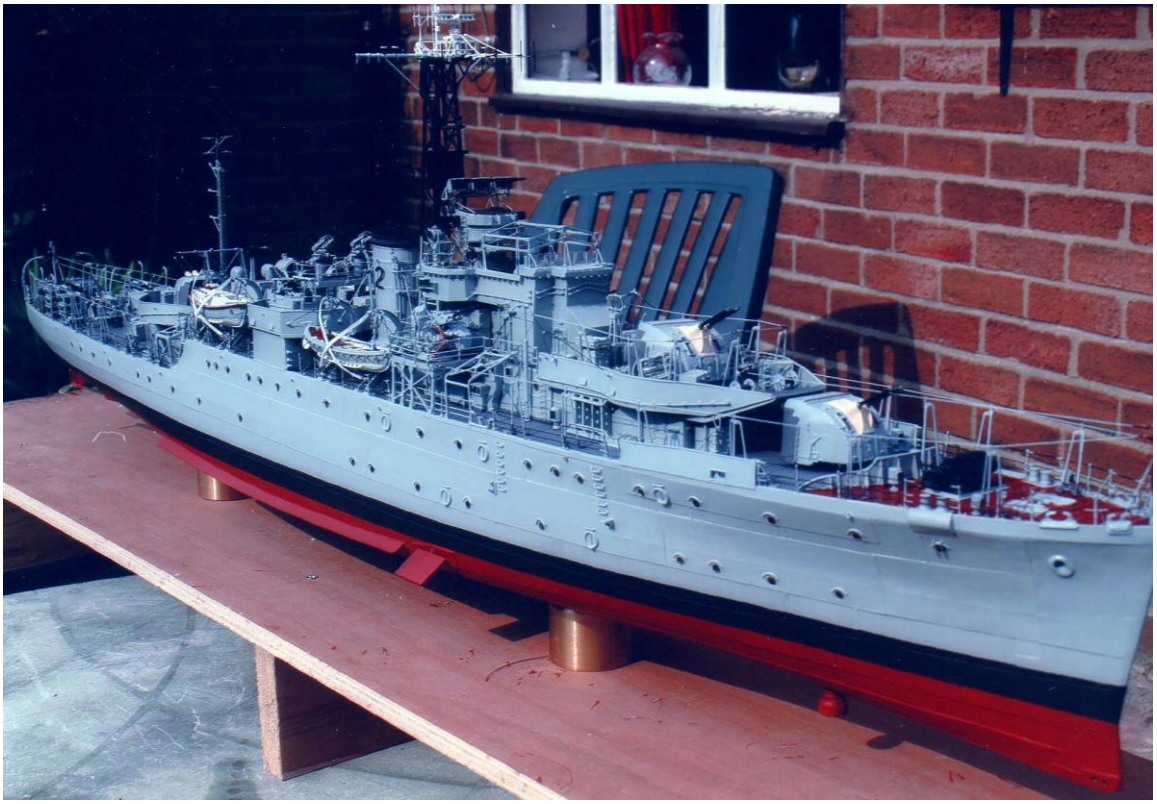
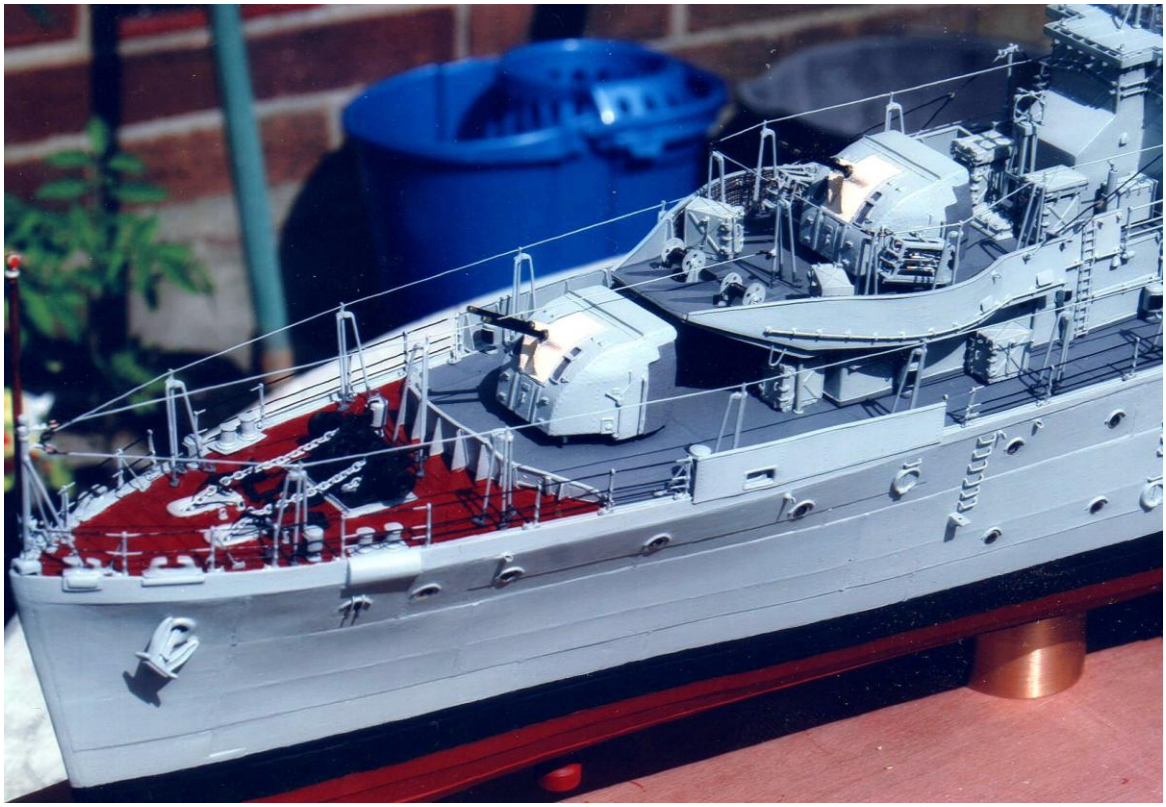
SHIP FOR SALE !

Shipmate Brian Turner has spent 2½ years carefully constructing a model of HMS Cygnet (U38).

The quality of his work is evident from the photos. On 8th April, 1944 in the north Atlantic just north-west of Cape Finisterre the *Cygnet*, together with *HMS Crane,* depth charged and sank the German U-Boat *U-962*.

HMS Cygnet **was a Black Swan Class sloop and the model together with its glass show case is now up for sale**





You can view more photos of the model work by clicking on this **LINK** and examine the detail more minutely.

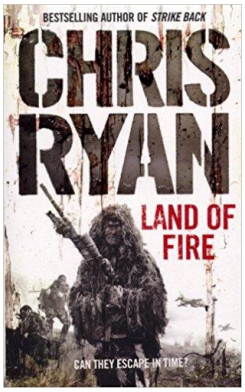
Length of model is 36 inches

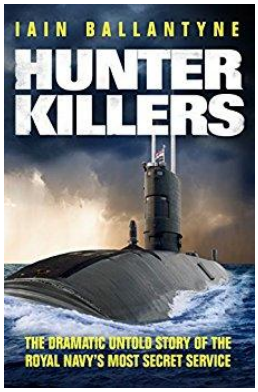
PRICE: £2,000

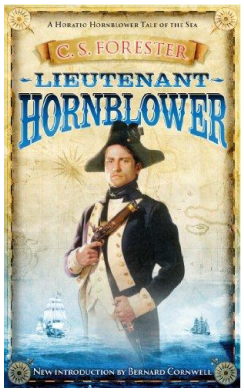
For more details please contact Brian Turner Click **HERE** to send email

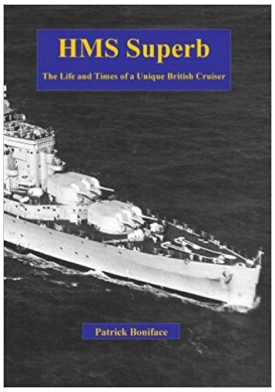
YOU TOO CAN ADVERTISE HERE FOR FREE - CONTACT BRIAN BY EMAIL

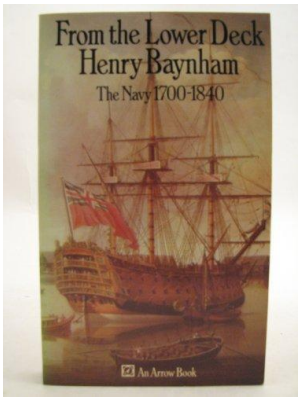
YOU WILL FIND MENTION OF HMS SUPERB IN ALL OF THESE BOOKS











LAND OF FIRE - author Chris Ryan - The submarine *HMS Superb* is mentioned from Chapter 12 (page 121 in the paperback version) when it was involved in the fictional landing of an SAS squad on Tierra del Fuego circa 2002. **Fiction**.

HUNTER KILLERS - author Iain Ballantyne - follows the careers of four daring British submarine captains who risked their lives to keep the rest of us safe, their exploits consigned to the shadows until now. Their experiences encompass the span of the Cold War, from voyages in WW2-era submarines under Arctic ice to nuclear-powered espionage missions in Soviet-dominated seas.

There are dangerous encounters with Russian spy ships in UK waters and finally, as the communist facade begins to crack, they hold the line against the Kremlin's oceanic might,

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playing a leading role in bringing down the Berlin Wall. It is the first time they have spoken out about their covert lives in the submarine service.

This is the dramatic untold story of Britain's most-secret service. Chapter 50 *follows HMS Superb*. **Non Fiction**

LIEUTENANT HORNBLOWER - author C.S. Forrester - In July of 1796 during the Napoleonic Wars when Hornblower's best friend Bush received his commission as lieutenant while serving on *HMS Superb*, and thus took the first significant step in his career as a naval officer. Bush recalls that he relied more on "seamanship and not navigation" to pass the requisite examination. **Fiction**.

HMS SUPERB - author Patrick Boniface - An account of one voyage of the cruiser

between 1954 - 55. Presented as a ship's log with historical content. **Non Fiction**.

FROM THE LOWER DECK - author Henry Baynham. An Arrow book ISBN 009 9065401. A picture of life in the Royal Navy between 1780 & 1840 as described by common sailors at the time. Mention of *HMS Superb* 74 is on Page 149 of the paperback version by George Watson. **Non Fiction**

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JOTTINGS OF A VERY ORDINARY SEAMAN

(By Ray Lambert)

There I was happy as Larry, having the time of my life out the Far Flung when out of the blue the 'Crossing-the-Line' ceremony raised its ugly head. I'd taken part before and, as my ears were a bit suspect I didn't want to get dunked in that canvas bath which had been rigged up, down on the back end.

HEY ! THANKS FOR THE LIFT LADS !

Being a done-it-all-before old hand, I was to be a policeman with the GI – rounding up stragglers but I knew that would put me in a vulnerable position with continual trips to where the action was taking place – with the inevitable dunking every time I hove into sight, so my plan was to keep out of the way and leave the GI on his own.

My plan was working well with me patrolling such places as the very front end of the focsle and the cable locker when toward the end of the festivities I was idiot enough to venture aft to (hopefully) watch proceedings' from afar. Big mistake. I chose a spot on the deck above where (again hopefully) no-one would look up and spot me. Second big mistake.

No sooner had I arrived in my not-very-safe haven than a shout went up with dozens of fingers pointing up, where I had been spotted. Those bods were nimble on their feet and before I had time to get away they were upon me and I was carried unceremoniously, shoulder high, by seven or eight of them down to that dreaded canvas bath contraption. By now that water was a little less than hygienic with the great lower deck unwashed having been through it on several occasions. Never the less I was dumped into the chair, given a generous application of some white soapy stuff and tipped back into the quagmire behind me. Willing hands all around made sure that I got the complete dunking they thought I deserved before they allowed me to scramble free.

We had been out in those foreign climes a while and I'd had no trouble with the ears although the heat must have been working away on them until that rotten dirty water worked its magic with the finishing touches. So a couple of days later I presented myself complete with ears, to the doc in the onboard sick-bay. He and the SBA worked for several weeks trying to rectify my problem but with very little success until eventually we were moved into Terror while the ship received a tidy-up in the nearby dockyard.

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Pretty soon I was shuffled off to the base sick-bay, a lovely light, cool, airy place with six beds to a room. In different circumstances I wouldn't have minded living there. The

doctor there was an Italian called Lis and one day during his morning surgery, he announced 'You're being surveyed'. I must have looked blank (what's new?) so the chief enlightened me 'You're going home lad.' Now I had got what I wanted, I didn't want it anymore; I liked being out there…..story of my life!

…….Sequel to this fascinating tale next time – if you can stand it.

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BANGERS AND MASH

(by Phil Grimson)

During 1950, I was serving on the battle-class destroyer *HMS St Kitts* on an anti-submarine exercise. When the sub was located, a leading seaman was delegated to pitch a grenade over the side to alert the sub that it had been discovered and "depth-charged".

Unfortunately, the grenade didn't clear the ship's side and landed on the port side potato locker, a cage-like affair, where it detonated. A shower of shrapnel played havoc with the contents and perforated the adjacent office of the coxswain who fortunately was at the wheel and so escaped injury.

In the Daily Orders the following morning this footnote appeared: "Ship's Company should be aware that today care should be taken not to consume quantities of iron not normally found in potatoes!"

And we always thought that Jimmy - the first lieutenant - was devoid of any sense of humour.

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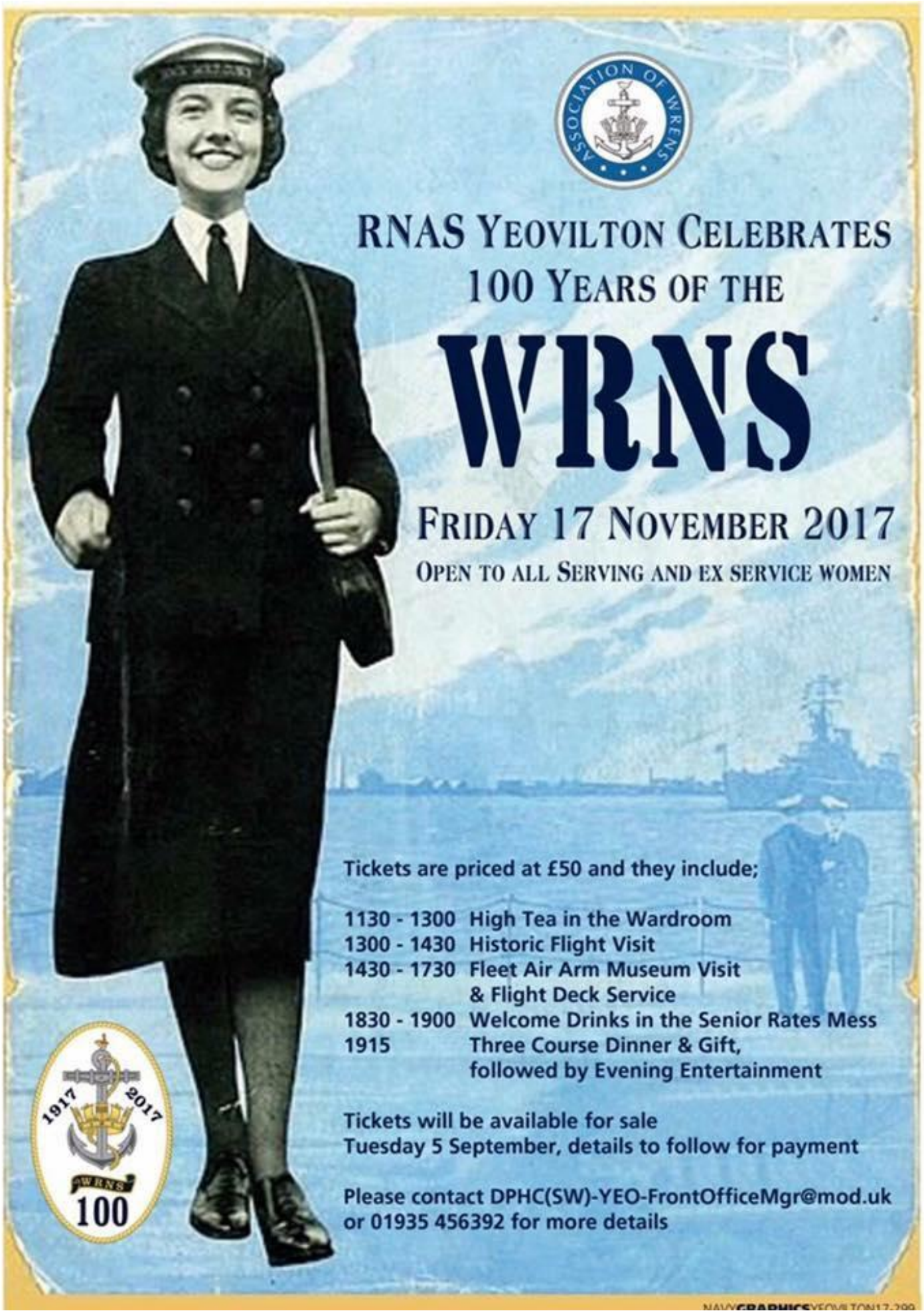
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100

REMEMBERING THE CHATHAM BUS DISASTER

(by Brian Saunders)

The 1951 Gillingham bus disaster occurred outside Chatham Dockyard, on the evening of 4 December 1951. A double-decker bus ploughed into a company of fifty-two young members of the Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps, aged between ten and thirteen. 24 cadets were killed and 18 injured; at the time it was the highest loss of life in any road accident in British history.

David George William Middleton was a Regulating Petty Officer on board the *Superb* between 25th May, 1952 until 5th September, 1954

A few years earlier he was on duty at *HMS Pembroke* gates, the night the cadets were killed coming down the hill towards the dockyard and remembered that tragic event.

The company of cadets was marching from Melville Royal Marine Barracks to the Royal Naval Barracks to attend a boxing tournament. It was divided into three platoons; the rear platoon consisted of new recruits who had not yet received uniforms. They were generally under the command of cadet non-commissioned officers (NCOs); the only adult present was the contingent adjutant, Lieutenant Clarence Murrayfield Carter, a regular Royal Marines officer. The column was about fifteen yards long and was marching three abreast on the left-hand side of the road. It was showing no lights, there being no official requirement to do so, and the boys in uniform were wearing Royal Marines standard-issue dark blue battledress and berets, although they had white belts and white lanyards on their shoulders.

The cadets left Melville Barracks at about 5.40pm. At about 5.57 or 5.58pm the column was marching down Dock Road, just past the gates of the Chatham Royal Naval Dockyard. The street lighting was very poor and it was allegedly a very dark/foggy night (although Carter denied this).

As the column passed the municipal swimming pool, a particularly dark part of the street (since a street lamp had failed), it was hit from behind by a bus belonging to the Chatham & District Traction Company. The bus was allegedly travelling at 15-20 miles per hour, although Carter and another witness estimated its speed as 40-45 miles per hour. The bus driver, John William George Samson, 57, had worked for the company for forty years, twenty-five of them as a driver. He was very familiar with the route. He had his sidelights on, but not his

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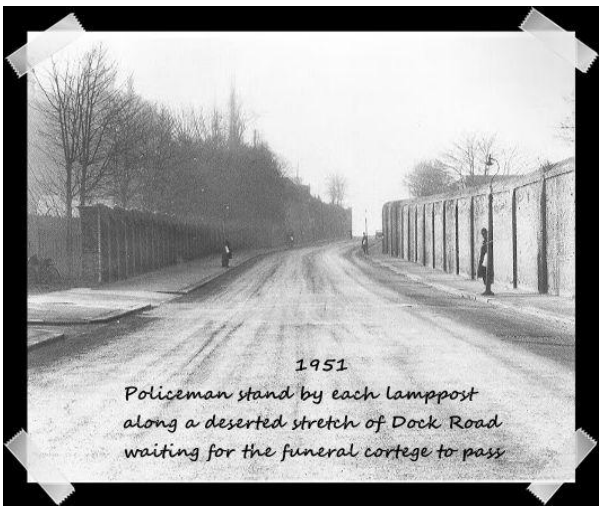
headlights; this was perfectly legal and considered to be normal practice at the time. Some bus drivers said that they were using headlights that night and in that location as it was particularly dark. Other drivers defended Samson's decision not to use his headlights.

Lieutenant Carter, who was moving up and down the flanks of the column, told the inquest that he saw the bus coming and told the boys to move into the kerb as far as they could, assuming the bus would move around them. Samson told the inquest that he did not see the cadets at all and was only aware he had driven into something when the bus started to wobble as though it "had run over a lot of loose stones or something", although it was also reported that he felt bumps and heard the high-pitched screams of the cadets. At that point he braked immediately. His conductress, Dorothy Dunster, called out "What's happened?", and Samson got out to see what had happened. Carter, who was knocked over and dazed but not injured, said the bus continued about fifty yards before braking and another witness said he thought about twenty-five yards.

Seventeen boys died immediately and another seven died later in hospital, all but one on the same night. Those who were uninjured were all in the front ranks. The military funeral of twenty of the boys who died was held at Rochester Cathedral on 12 December 1951 and conducted by the Bishop of Rochester. Thousands of local people stood outside the cathedral and lined the route of the funeral procession to Gillingham Cemetery. Royal Marines guarded the coffins and acted as pall bearers and the ceremony was attended by, among others, the Second Sea Lord, the Commandant-General Royal Marines, and the Parliamentary and Financial Secretary of the Admiralty. Three of the boys who were Roman Catholics had a separate funeral at the Church of Our Lady, Gillingham, conducted by the Bishop of Southwark.

An inquest was held on 14 December 1951 at the Royal Naval Hospital, Gillingham, where many of the injured were being treated, before the North-East Kent Coroner. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death. The coroner said that he believed that Lieutenant Carter and the other witness, George Thomas Dixon, were probably mistaken about the speed of the bus and accepted Samson's estimate of his speed. He did not believe that either Carter or Samson had been negligent in legal terms.



Despite the coroner's comments, Samson was charged with dangerous driving. He was found guilty at the Central Criminal Court, but with a recommendation of leniency from the jury. The judge banned him from driving for three years and fined him £20.

The parents of the boys who died received a total of £10,000 compensation

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from the bus company, which accepted liability under the tort of negligence. The accident resulted in improved street lighting in the Medway Towns and the decision of all three services that a red light would henceforward be shown at the rear of all columns marching along roads at night.

The mayors of Gillingham, Rochester and Chatham set up a memorial fund, inviting public donations through the local and national press "to be devoted, among other things, to defraying the funeral expenses, caring for the boys who may be disabled, and then to such worthy cause or causes in memory of the boys who lost their lives, as the mayors may determine". Donations of nearly £9,000 were received. Over £2,300 was spent, but the mayors could not decide how to apply the balance of the funds. A court case later decided that the fund was not charitable and that the fund's objects were too uncertain for it to be a valid trust and as a result the monies should be returned to the donors.

Every year on the Sunday closest to the event, the Chatham Marine Cadet Unit still holds a memorial parade at the cemetery in which the cadets were laid to rest.

A brief You Tube video commemorating this disaster can be seen by clicking on this **LINK**

HAVE YOU A STORY TO TELL ?

We'd love to print your story so why not put pen to paper

It doesn't need to be a novel - just some of your memories which will eventually be lost forever unless told now

Several members have sent in their own & they are available to read on our website

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The Early Years 1945 to 1948 PART 4

(by Lofty) **CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH**

Whilst in Copenhagen the ship was frequently open for visitors and on Friday, 13th June a female visitor was taken ill and was rushed to hospital. Later that day His Excellency the British Ambassador Admiral Anderson and Colonel Reese were welcomed on board and entertained until the small hours of Saturday morning.

Admiral Packer CB left the ship at 0955 on Sunday, 15th to pay his respects to King Frederick IV and the following day, an excellent goodwill visit completed, We were under way at 0902.

However, due to bad weather conditions and after passing eight Swedish minesweepers the ship's progress was slowed by fog throughout the night with visibility to just 2 cables.

The nights were never dark because of the so-called "White Nights of June" and this unexpected fog descended at 2050 and we posted lookouts. The fog became thicker and by 0415 it was so dense that we, together with the *Ainse* and *Dido* we anchored in 25 fathoms in the Stockholm Approaches near the Alma Grundet light. The fog lifted by midday and we weighed anchor and with the sea flat calm we led the other ships into the Swedish capital arriving at 1610.

The next morning two Swedish motor torpedo boats and a motor yacht secured to the port side and Admiral Packer was ferried ashore and the Swedish tug *Strangaven* came alongside and a pontoon and gangway were secured which allowed visitors to more easily come on board. The first visitors were VIP's from the Swedish Navy, Government and also the British navy.

On Friday, 20th June, the cruiser *Dido* came alongside and we shackled together in preparation for later festivities when suddenly a small fire was discovered in the Blacksmith's shop on board the *Superb*. Well practised hands successfully extinguished it by 1410 and later that afternoon the officers of both ships arranged for the quarterdecks of both to be the site of the officer's dance. Awnings were rigged over both quarterdecks and the festivities began at 2100.

The next day, 21st June, the Swedish Minister of Defence came on board for a visit and he was followed by members of the public who seemed genuinely impressed by both of the British warships in harbour.

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We and *HMS Dido* weighed anchors at 1715 and left Stockholm for passage to Sheerness on Monday, 23rd June after a very entertaining and apparently successful stay. Our small convoy put to sea with the destroyer *Aisne* with us taking up the rear and *Dido* as vanguard.

Three more warships, *Cleopatra, Solebay* and *Gabbard*, joined our small group two days later and on Thursday 26th even more ships including the carrier *Vengeance* and the destroyers *Sluys, Cadiz* and *Jutland* joined. On the approach to the Home port of Sheerness a simulated attack by *Lancaster* bombers, *Hornets* and *Meteor* jet aircraft by the Royal Air Force was included in the sea exercises which once again honed our sea-warfare skills.

Friday, 27th June found us temporarily alongside at Sheerness at 1830 only to move across the Estuary on the Saturday to anchor off the seaside town of Southend where we remained until 3rd July.

We put to sea again later that day and made passage for Rosyth and at 1409 on 5th July passed under the Forth Bridge where the *Duke of York* and the cruiser *Diadem* were already positioned and anchored at 1430.

On Sunday, 6th Number 2 store was reported flooded and the Stoker's emergency parties were employed in pumping it out. The only serious loss was reported as 5lbs of leaf tobacco lost by water damage.

The ship stayed at anchor until the following Thursday when she weighed anchor and sailed north with the fleet bound for Loch Ewe. During the passage *Mosquito* aircraft from 772 RAF Squadron made a series of dummy attacks on us and *Diadem*. As a result of illness or accident it was necessary to evacuate a seaman to the nearest hospital at Aberdeen and as a result we entered Aberdeen harbour at 1338 and anchored in 8 fathoms whilst the transfer was made.

Once the seaman was safely ashore the ship put to sea once again.

On Friday 11th July at 1625 and prior to the arrival at Loch Ewe, another small fire was discovered and extinguished in the Shipwright's shop. We anchored amongst the fleet which included *HMS Cleopatra*.

Most of us looked forward to the forthcoming competitions and the Squadron held whaler and dinghy races on Tuesday, 15th July.

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Two days later the fleet sailed for the Fleet Review at Gourock on the Clyde. Exercises

were conducted with *Howe, Anson, Vengeance* and *Illustrious* en route and as the day came to an end all the ships anchored in the naval base. On Sunday, 20th July there were rehearsals for the Royal visit and the ships open to visitors.

King George VI and Queen Elizabeth arrived on Tuesday 22nd and the Home Fleet assembled whilst men and officers from all the ships made last minute preparations. On board our ship the Royal Guard was assembled at 0745 and members of the ship's company dressed the ship overall with flags and bunting.

At 1005 we fired a 21 Gun salute as the Royal Party boarded for the first of several times during the review. The Royals made a tour of the ship and left at 1955.

On Wednesday, 23rd July at 0855 Divisions from the ships *Diadem, Cleopatra Sirius* and *Dido* came on board together with members of the press and the masters of the assembled Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Then Divisions for the Royal Inspection were fallen in at 0955 and later the Royal Party took the Royal Barge from Cardwell Bay in Gourock to *HMS Maidstone* at 1005 and after a brief tour of the Depot ship arrived on board We at 1045

The King and Queen ceremoniously piped on board HMS Superb, the flagship of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron, and the King then inspected the guard and is said to have been very pleased with what he saw.

The Royal Party together with members of the press left the ship at 1130 and then Mr Alexander the Secretary of State for Scotland was piped on board. He had a private discussion with Admiral Packer before leaving the ship at 1340.

The Royal Party came back on board 1045 on Thursday, 24th July for a trip around the Isle of Arran and the ship was underway at 12 knots. Their Majesties left the ship at 1210 returning later and finally disembarked at 1856.

On Sunday, 27th July with the rest of the fleet we set a course for Cowes and on the way made exercises at sea with the battleship *Duke of York* and the aircraft carrier *Vengeance* and other cruisers from the 2nd Cruiser Squadron.

On Thursday, 31st July the convoy was attacked by more Royal Air Force *Meteors, Vampires* and *Beaufighters* in more exercises and arrived at Cowes at 0817 and detached from the main force with *Illustrious, Vengeance, Cadiz* and *Opportune* set a course for Spithead where we anchored in the Cowes Roads at 1114.

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The Queen's birthday was celebrated on Monday, 4th August. *The Superb* was dressed overall and remained at anchor until Sunday, 10th when we sailed for Portland.

After a further three days we sailed back to Chatham arriving there on Thursday, 14th.

This was a short lived stay because we returned to sea and again made for Portland arriving there on the next day. There we remained until 2nd October and, after completing more daily sea exercises over the rest of August slipped our moorings on Thursday, 6th November and sailed for Spithead arriving there at 2300 and, due to the lateness of the hour, unable to enter Portsmouth dockyard spent the weekend at Number 6 Buoy in *Fountain's Lake* off Whale Island.

On Monday, 10th November at 1600 we went back to our anchorage at Spithead for an overnight stay.

The next day we set sail for Weymouth Bay and remained there until 12th December apart from a couple of days performing sea exercises. On the 12th we made passage for Sheerness arriving there later that same day.

There, at Sheerness, we de-ammunitioned and stores were taken from the ship which occupied the ship's company for the whole weekend.

We sailed again on Monday, 15th December along the Medway to Chatham and entered the North Lock at 1230 and were then safely secured in the relative calmness of the dockyard.

On the following Thursday were moved by tugs to Number 9 dock for maintenance and repairs. Leave was granted and some members of the ship's company managed to get back to their homes, the lucky ones being able to spend Christmas and the New year with their families.

1948

It had not ended there because after Christmas and the New year of 1948 worked recommenced and on Friday, 2nd January all hands were employed restoring gear on the upper deck and painting ship between decks. Then the ship was moved from the dry dock to Number 3 Basin, North-east wall and by 1005 she was secured to Farewell Jetty. An electrical fire broke out in the morning of the next day but was quickly extinguished by damage control.

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On Thursday, 8th January, we slipped from Chatham and moved to Folly Point where we ammunitioned and took on fresh stores. This took until Friday, 23rd January when we sailed for Portland arriving there the next morning and berthed at Number 3 Buoy within the harbour.

On Thursday, 5th February, we took part in sea exercises off Portland which included mock torpedo attacks using dummy torpedoes. At 1505 we returned to harbour and secured to C4 Buoy and remained there until 17th of the month when we sailed with the fleet to Gibraltar. En route we carried out night time encounter exercises with the 4th Destroyer Flotilla and early in the morning of Wednesday, 18th the ship was once again the target for 19 Group RAF aircraft.

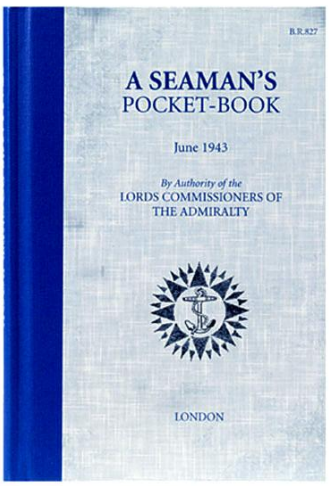
At 0704 we were subjected to simulated air attacks made by two Lancaster bombers. Saturday, 21st February dawned bright and sunny as the ships arrived at Gibraltar and we were soon secured to 16 Berth and by the following Tuesday were moved from the South Mole to berth alongside Flagstaff Jetty.

USS Portmouth

An impressive site to behold were the immense steel walls of the American fleet when on 2nd March, a large force of American cruisers and destroyers departed Gibraltar. The ships included the light cruiser *USS Portsmouth* and the destroyers *Gearing, Vogelsang, Eugene Greene* and the ammunition vessel *Grand Canyon*.

On Thursday, 11th March our ship set sail for Portland at 0900 and took part in more exercises on the way back which included an IFFX with the destroyer *Agincourt*. Portland was reached on Tuesday, 16th March just as the destroyers *Battleaxe* and *Crossbow* left port.

On the 19th March, 1948 we made our way to Sheerness where we once again, de-ammunitioned and then back to Chatham where we completed our passage on 23rd March, 1948.



THE END

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PHOTO ALBUM

These photos sent in by shipmate Bill Cook on the 1956-57 Cruise

Above : Binks

Right: Jacky

Below: Shopping in Mombasa

Bottom: Sweeney

Have you a photo of the Superb?

We are endeavouring to collect as many photos or newspaper cuttings which relate to members of the crew (that does include YOU) or an image of the ship itself

The reason behind this is to help complete the history of one of the longest serving (by name) British Royal Navy ships

Contact Brian Saunders, if you can help, by email

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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)

Peter Wells was a National Serviceman aboard Superb for the 55/56 Africa cruise - he passed away in March 2015 at age 78 after a long battle with cancer. He had a rich fund of stories of his time in the navy, which was clearly always one of the favourite periods of what was a full and good life. He was one of the youngest sailors on board (Message from Steven, Peter's son)

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PEOPLE SEARCHING 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 ..

From previous issues

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 e 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

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PERSONS WHO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE

Andy **Brierley** (1954) - Derek **Baldry** (1956) - Alf **Brown** (1954) - Bob **Butcher** (1951) - Ron **Clay** (1956-57) - Bill **Cook** (1956) - Jim **Copus** (1954) - Ted **Davy** (1945 Canada) - John **Eccleston** (1956) - Mark Field (Son of Charlie **Field** 1946) - Clive **Godley** (1954) - Maureen Taylor (Daughter of Ron **Gray** 1946) - Phil **Grimson** (1953 & 1954) - Tony **Hacket** (1953) - Terry Hall (son of Bert **Hall** 1946) - Alan **Harmer** (1955 - 56) - Joe **Heaton** (1956) - Brian **Hill** (1954) - Emile [Coder] **Keane** (1954 - 55) - Rita Keeler (Wife of Brian **Keeler** 1954) - Charlie **Kingston** (1956) - Sharon Goodall (Daughter of Fred **Kinsey** Co-Founder 1950-52) - Ray **Lambert** (1955) - Don **Lawrence** (1954) - Peter **MacDonald** (1949-51) - Arthur **Maxted** (1951) - George **Messmer** (USN 1954 - USA) - Malcolm **Milham** (1953) - Wendy **Norman** (Wife of David Norman 1956) - Margaret Norgan (Wife of Jim **Norgan** 1946) - Frank **Nunn** (1954) - Dave **Perrin** (1954) - Debbie Richardson (Daughter of Bill **Potticary** (1952) - Brian **Saunders** (1954 - 55 France) - Will Sherwood (Son of Bill **Sherwood** 1954) - Rob **Smith** (1956) - Jeff Stewart (Son of Jim **Stewart** 1947 Australia) - Pete **Tasker** (1954) - Paul Taylor (Son of Ken **Taylor** 1954) - Brian **Turner** (Associate) - John **Voak** - John **Ward** (1953) - Norman **Webber** (1956) - Jon **Willshir** (1953 Thailand)

Click here to contact Brian Saunders by email

To send an email from this page
If you are using "GOOGLE CHROME" please right click with your mouse on the link above and select "open link in new tab" otherwise just left click on the link

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MEMBERSHIP

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION ?

THE ANNUAL FEE IS £10 & YOU WILL RECEIVE 4 NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR & ELIGABLE TO ATTEND REUNIONS

TELEPHONE ROBIN SMITH AT 01634 362 379

OR EMAIL HIM AT robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk

An **Application Form** can be downloaded HERE

Our Chairman

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Past Copies of the Magazine can be accessed on-line by clicking on the appropriate month

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