

# **CHINA FLEET CLUB**

**HONG KONG**

**BUILT IN 1934 WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY  
ADMIRALTY AND MEN OF THE LOWER DECK  
BY WHOM THE CLUB IS OWNED AND MANAGED.**



**A HISTORY OF THE CLUB  
COMPILED FOR PAST, PRESENT  
AND FUTURE MEMBERS**

**JUNE, 1948**

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## PREFACE

### OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, FAR EAST STATION.

1st January, 1952.

I am pleased to introduce to the Fleet this up-to-date history of the China Fleet Club.

The Club is run for the men of the Fleet by the men of the Fleet and I commend this book to all newcomers to the Station; they will find it interesting and it will also enable them to appreciate that the Club as it is today would not exist but for the efforts and contributions of their predecessors.

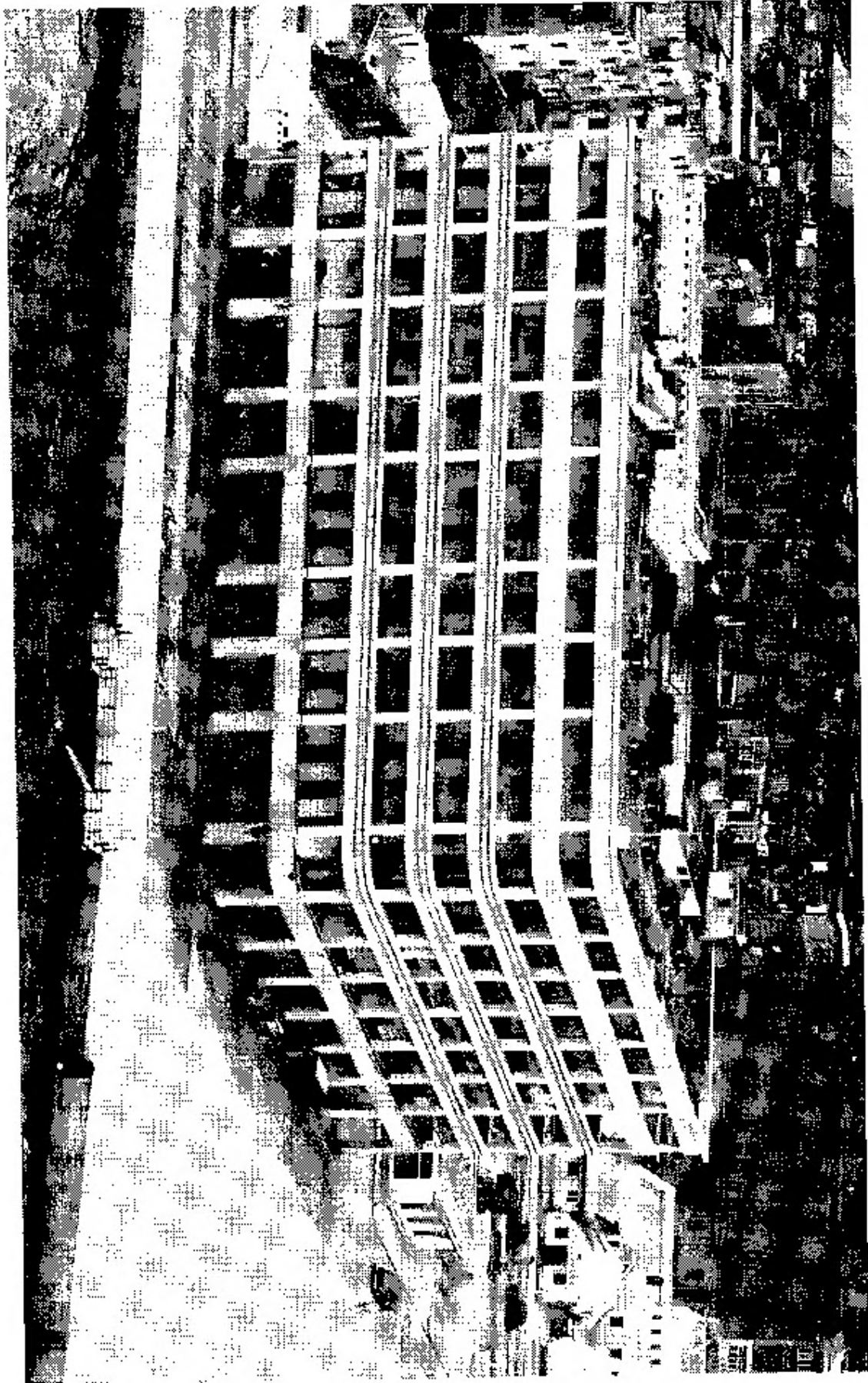
At the same time, I am sure that this book will give much pleasure to those who have been associated with the Club in the past and who may now be far from Hong Kong.

I send my best wishes to the China Fleet Club and to those who manage and use it.

GUY RUSSELL,

*Vice Admiral.*

CHINA FLEET CLUB



# THE ROYAL NAVAL CANTEEN AND CHINA FLEET CLUB

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It is unfortunate that with a few exceptions all the old China Fleet Club records were either lost or destroyed during the Japanese occupation. It is, therefore, not possible to give a complete and authentic account of its history up to the date of the Colony's re-occupation.

The Admiralty have been approached and have supplied a certain amount of information about its early history but this goes no further back than 1934, the date when the Club was finally completed and opened for the men of the Fleet.

At one time it seemed that little light could be thrown on the Club's career from 1934 to 1941. Fortunately, however, we have present in the Colony, Mr. F. G. Hill, who was Manager of the Club during this period and it is due to his very kind co-operation and assistance that it has been possible to fill in this gap.

## THE ROYAL NAVAL CANTEEN

Prior to 1914, and up to 1934, before the China Fleet Club came into existence there was a Royal Naval Canteen in Hong Kong. This Canteen was situated at the corner of Arsenal Street and Hennessy Road, Wanchai. The building was old-fashioned, without modern sanitation, and in such a bad state generally, that in 1920 it was planned to spend \$10,000 on its redecoration and repair. The premises had been purchased at a cost of \$40,000 and their value at that time was in the region of \$120,000 to \$150,000.

The future of the Royal Naval Canteen was, however, already at stake for early in 1920 the Commander-in-Chief, China Station, reported that a reclamation scheme was being contemplated by the Hong Kong Government with a view to widening and straightening Queen's Road, which would involve demolishing the Canteen.

Also, about this time, a proposal was made that a joint Club for Navy and Army personnel, to be known as the Union Jack, should be built.

The first steps to acquire a new site for the Canteen were taken in 1922, but nothing materialised. Progress towards this end seems to have been slow and probably was due to the difficulty of coming to a decision as to whether the Union Jack Club scheme should be put into effect. However, in 1924, it was decided to abandon this project and concentrate on a Club for naval personnel only, leaving the Army to proceed with the Union Jack Club, which was eventually built for the use of the garrison. Meanwhile another site had been selected. This was on the reclaimed land in the vicinity of Arsenal Street adjoining Queen's Road.

It was estimated that \$1,400,000 would be required for the new Canteen and it was proposed that this should be met as follows—

From the old Canteen ... ..	\$500,000
From Hong Kong Government for site of old premises ... ..	\$400,000

and the balance of \$500,000 made good by an Admiralty grant.

This site, however, was not accepted by the Admiralty as it was too near the Naval Arsenal, and the Trustees of the Canteen were told to look for another more suitable location.

Discussions meanwhile had been taking place with the Admiralty as to the status of the Canteen and it was finally established that it belonged to the Men of the Fleet.

During the intervening years the Naval Dockyard had expanded and a good deal of land had changed hands between the Admiralty and the Hong Kong Government, the net result of which was that the Naval Arsenal was transferred to Stonecutters Island. This paved the way for further negotiations with the Hong Kong Government and in 1929, when notice was formally received that the Royal Naval Canteen would have to be evacuated, the Government promised payment of compensation for the old property and offered a site in Gloucester Road on which a new Canteen could be erected.

This site was accepted and a Committee of officers was appointed by the Commander-in-Chief, China Station, to go into the financial state of the Canteen and to make recommendations as to its future organisation and activities.

At that time, the assets of the Canteen were comparatively small and 90% of the furniture and fittings was considered most unsuitable for transfer to a new and modern building. The compensation offered by the Government was in no way sufficient to meet the cost of a new building, for which some \$735,000 was needed. All that could be raised was:—

From the old Canteen	... ..	\$166,000
From the Weihaiwei Canteen	... ..	\$ 30,000
Government Compensation	... ..	\$154,000

leaving a balance of \$385,000 to be found.

Admiralty was asked to help with an interest free loan of £20,000 but was unable to meet this request. However, after considerable discussion with the Treasury, a gift of £5,000 was approved in July, 1931.

Many meetings were held in an endeavour to find ways and means of raising the necessary additional capital to proceed with the new Canteen building, and it is to the late Sir Vandeleur M. Grayburn, then Chief Manager of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation, that the Fleet is indebted for the present China Fleet Club. It was on his guarantee that the Bank agreed to allow an overdraft to cover the cost of erecting and furnishing a new building to take the place of the old Canteen, or "Blue Buildings" as it was then commonly called by the men of the Fleet. This name was given to the building, when it was originally taken over as a Canteen, because the exterior was painted a blue colour and "old-timers" still refer to the good old days spent in the "Blue."

With this assurance from the Chief Manager of the Bank, steps were taken to draw up plans for the new Canteen. Messrs. Leigh & Orange were appointed Architects, and Mr. A. S. Mackichan was entrusted with the work of preparing construction plans for the consideration of the naval authorities. In due course these plans were submitted. They allowed for basement, ground floor, and five other storeys, and provision was made for Bars, Billiards Rooms, Reading Rooms, Dining Rooms, Cubicles, Dormitories, Offices, Staff Quarters, Kitchen, Laundry, Boiler House, Mineral Water Factory, and Theatre.

The plans were provisionally passed, and tenders called for. The receipt of these tenders, however, caused great consternation, for the costs far exceeded those estimated, and to quote a signal received from

the Commander-in-Chief, "the Trustees of the Club are placed in a most difficult position, from which they must extricate themselves." The Commander-in-Chief would not sanction such a large outlay over and above the original estimated cost.

Further conferences were then held by the Naval authorities, Architects and Contractors, and a revised plan was produced. This reduced the size of the building by one floor, and large savings were effected by the use of cement other than "Green Island Cement," the use of less expensive materials for partition walls, and by having smaller lifts.

These revised plans, with a greatly reduced cost for construction, were finally approved, and the work began. The construction Contractors were Messrs. Lam Woo & Company of Hong Kong, and other Contractors were Messrs. Dodwell & Co.—Water & Sanitation; Messrs. Jardine, Matheson & Co. and Messrs. W. Jack & Co.—Electrical Fittings; and other contracts were given to the Hong Kong Electric Co., the H.K. & China Gas Co., and other firms in the Colony. All the steel used in the building came from England.

Meanwhile further appeals had been made to the Admiralty for financial assistance, and an Admiralty Fleet Order issued to all units of the Royal Navy asking for contributions. A generous response was forthcoming. In addition to the donations from the Fleet, the Admiralty allocated £7,000 from the surplus arising from the old Naval Savings Bank, and the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation handed back, as a gift, the amount of Interest which had been charged on the bank overdraft for approximately three years.

### THE CHINA FLEET CLUB

On 11th January, 1933, the foundation stone of the China Fleet Club, as it had so been named, was laid by Admiral Sir Howard Kelly, G.B.E., K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., then Commander-in-Chief, China Station.

During this year the work on the new building proceeded apace and the main structure began to take shape. It is interesting to note that the Club is built on piles of Canadian fir, driven deep down into the ground and virtually standing in water.

The China Fleet Club stands on Government land, embracing an area of 19,757 square feet, which is leased to the Trustees of the Club for 999 years. This lease, ante-dated to 25th June, 1863, was executed on 20th June, 1934.

The Crown rent for the property is \$408 per annum.

On 27th December, 1933, the Theatre was completed and formally opened. The Theatre was immediately engaged by the Hong Kong Amateur Dramatic Club for rehearsals, and production of plays. In addition, Tombola was played in the Theatre on three evenings each week, the Club taking a 10% share of the receipts.

On 21st March, 1934, the main Club was formally opened by Commodore Frank Elliott, R.N., Commodore, Hong Kong, and the following officials were appointed:—

Honorary Treasurer	— Accountant Officer, H.M.S. "Tamar."
Manager	— Chief Petty Officer (Executive).
Assistant Manager	— Sergeant, Royal Marines.
Bed Ticket Office Staff	— Four Marines.
Secretary (part-time)	— Chief P.O. Writer, H.M.S. "Tamar."

During the same year, the China Fleet Club was legally established as a Corporation, and on 18th May, 1934 the Governor signed an Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance for the Incorporation of the Trustees of the China Fleet Club." The effect of this Ordinance was to make the Trustees of the China Fleet Club, as appointed by the Commodore, or Officer-in-Charge of R.N. Naval Establishments in Hong Kong, a body corporate, or Corporation, with the power to hold and deal with its property. The advantages of having the Club incorporated are that in the event of either of the Trustees leaving the Colony new Trustees can be appointed by the Commodore-in-Charge under Section 2(3) of the Ordinance, and the Club having perpetual succession can be operated by whosoever may be appointed as the Trustees.

When finally completed and finished, the total cost of the Club amounted to some \$1,250,000.00.

### 1934 TO THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

During the first twelve months of the new Club, the ruling prices of Beer, Wines and Spirits were rather high when compared with other Clubs in the Colony, and the Club was not patronized as well as it might have been. However, at the end of 1934 the Club showed a nett profit of approximately \$35,000.



To remedy this the Club staff was re-organised, the number of Boys engaged by the Club reduced by 25 per cent, the price of Meals revised, and charges for Beer, Wines and Spirits reduced by 10 per cent. In addition, the Men's Bar on the Ground Floor was made larger by knocking down a dividing wall and taking in a Reading Room as part of the Bar. This caused a great deal of satisfaction throughout the Fleet, and the Club became very popular. That year, greater interest was taken in the Club by both officers and men, and on the return of the Fleet from the North, billiards and snooker competitions were arranged. Silver cups were presented by Messrs. H. Ruttonjee & Son for competition, and members of the winning teams were presented with replicas of the cups given by a lady interested in the welfare of the Club, and medals, purchased from Club funds, were given to the runners-up. These competitions were held annually until 1940, by which time the China Fleet had, to a large extent, dispersed to other stations of the Empire.

The Rules of the China Fleet Club were first issued in printed form in 1935 and fortunately one of the original copies is still in the club's possession.

The Officers and Trustees of the Club were as follows:—

OFFICERS: President—The Commander-in-Chief, China Station.

Vice-President—The Flag Captain.

Hon. Sec. & Treasurer—The Accountant Officer, H.M.S. "Tamar."

Manager & Asst. Secretary—C.P.O. Writer F. G. Hill.

TRUSTEES: The Commodore, Hong Kong.

The Chief Manager, Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation.

The GENERAL COMMITTEE consisted of the following:—

The Commodore, Hong Kong (representing the Commander-in-Chief), Chairman.

The Flag Captain (if present).

All Officers of Captain's rank in command of ships present.

The 2 Senior Commanding Officers of Destroyers present.

The 2 Senior Commanding Officers of Submarines present.

The Senior Commanding Officer of Sloops, Surveying Ships and Gunboats present.

The Fleet Accountant Officer, or Senior Accountant Officer present, other than TAMAR I.

The Fleet Royal Marine Officer, or Senior Royal Marine Officer present.

The Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.

The HOUSE COMMITTEE consisted of the following:—

The Commodore, Hong Kong—Chairman.

The Flag Captain, if present.

The Fleet Accountant Officer, if present.

The Fleet Recreation Officer, if present.

The Commander of H.M.S. TAMAR.

The Executive Officers of all Cruisers, Aircraft Carrier, and H.M.S. Medway, when present.

The 2 Senior Executive Officers of H.M.S. Duncan and Destroyers present.

The Senior Executive Officer of West River Gunboats present.

In addition, there was a MEN'S SUB-COMMITTEE consisting of the following representatives:—

The Commodore, Hong Kong, or an Officer of the House Committee, as Chairman.

1 Chief or Petty Officer, or Sergeant R.M., and

1 Junior rating from each of the following units—

Each cruiser; H.M.S. Medway;

H.M.S. Tamar; Aircraft Carrier;

The Destroyer Flotilla (each group of 5 destroyers or under) and H.M.S. Bruce;

The 4th Submarine Flotilla (each group of 8 submarines or under);

The West River Flotilla;

Sloops and H.M.S. Herald.

In April, 1935, the Club officials were re-organised, and the following appointed in place of those nominated in the previous year:—

Honorary Treasurer—Accountant Officer, H.M.S. Tamar.

Manager & Asst. Secretary—Chief Petty Officer Writer.

Assistant Manager—Petty Officer.

Watchkeepers—Four Marines (eventually replaced by Chinese clerks).

Except as regards the constitution of the General Committee and House Committee, and Men's Sub-Committee, the General Rules and Bye-Laws of the Club corresponded very much to those in force today, which are modelled on the old rules.

1935 was generally a successful year as far as the Club was concerned. The Theatre was engaged for long periods at a time by the H.K. Amateur Dramatic Club, the Philharmonic Society, and the H.K. Singers, and the winter boxing competitions were also held in the Theatre.

Sleeping accommodation for libertymen had, however, become acute and generally speaking all beds in the Club were booked up by 6 p.m. In an attempt to ease this lack of accommodation a further two hundred beds were purchased, and placed on the verandahs, thus giving a total of 650 beds for the use of libertymen. This accommodation was, however, considerably restricted when the policy of billeting ships' companies in the Club during refitting periods was adopted. This policy was a good one during the summer months, when the main Fleet was away from Hongkong—it added revenue to the Club, and gave the crews of submarines and destroyers a welcome change from their cramped conditions on board.

But when as many as 450 ratings were billeted in the Club at one time, this naturally prevented many liberty-men from sleeping in the Club at night. This caused some resentment in the Fleet against this policy and accordingly it was decided to utilize the accommodation available in other Homes, Institutes, and Clubs in the Colony, with the China Fleet Club taking the balance.

To turn to the financial side, it will have been noted that the Club started with a considerable overdraft. This overdraft stood at \$134,400 in April, 1933 and, as time went on, doubt was expressed as to whether the Club would ever clear itself of this burden. This is confirmed by the fact that an appeal was made to the Fleet for assis-

tance and, that during 1935 and 1936, the majority if not all of the ships and establishments of the China Fleet, besides other Stations and ships, made donations to the Club.

The following are listed in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, China Station, in February, 1936 as having made contributions during 1935:—H.M. Ships Ganges; Suffolk; Royal Sovereign; Home Fleet; Plymouth Command; R.N. & R.M. Sports Committee, Portsmouth; Mediterranean Station; H.M. Ships Fitzroy; Marshall Soult; Duchess; Achilles; Resolution; Kent; Tamar; Eagle; Cumberland and Dorsetshire.

In spite of this help, after paying all the bills connected with the building and equipping of the Club, the overdraft at the Bank stood at \$368,290 in April, 1935 and had been reduced only to \$327,290 in June, 1936. On the other side, however, the audit of the books and accounts of the Club for the year ending 31st December, 1935 showed an increased turnover with a nett profit of \$65,000 as compared with \$35,000 for the previous year.

Further satisfactory progress continued to be made and 1936 ended with a nett profit of \$125,000. Thereafter, the profits of the Club steadily increased and by 1938 it could be said to have been firmly established insofar as its finances were concerned.

At this rate, and given normal conditions, the Club would have been out of debt by the end of 1940. This was quite contrary to the opinion of financial experts who, in 1933, estimated that it would take fifteen years to pay off the debt on the building. Judging from actual experience in 1938, it looked as if the debt would have been cleared in six years. The interest of the men of the Fleet had increased, and the Theatre was extensively used for Ship's Concerts, Military Concerts, Boxing Competitions, Hongkong Amateur Dramatic productions, and Dances organised by the Fleet, and also by the Cheerio Club of Hong Kong.

Although prices had been reduced and the Fleet spent less time in Hong Kong—Singapore being an accomplished naval base—considerable profits continued to be made. By 1938 the overdraft at the Bank had been reduced to approximately \$75,000, and all debts on the Club in connection with construction and furnishing had been paid. This improved financial state gave considerable satisfaction besides dispelling any doubts as to the Club's ability to pay its way in the future and letters of congratulation were received both from the Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief, China Station.

For those men who are comparatively new to the Navy it may be of interest to turn back and see what the China Fleet was like about this time. The Fleet consisted of the 8th Cruiser Squadron, comprising 5 or 6 ships of the "County" or "London" Class, 8" cruisers; the 8th Destroyer Flotilla comprising the old "D" Class destroyers; H.M.S. Eagle, aircraft carrier; H.M.S. Medway, submarine Depot Ship, and Submarines; a M.T.B. Flotilla, a score or so of Gunboats and a few sloops. The Shore Establishments did not exist, the Ship's Company of TAMAR being accommodated in the old "Tamar." This veteran whose white sides and tall yellow masts gave such distinction and atmosphere to the Dockyard was doomed to be scuttled in the harbour during war and her hulk has now been broken up by salvage contractors.

To old China "birds" the Dockyard will never be quite the same without the old Tamar and her loss is much mourned by all those who knew her and served in her.

A small naval air station was operated at Kai Tak.

With this sizeable fleet it was considered that the Club would have no difficulty in paying its way and this was amply borne out in fact, despite the competition it had to meet from outside. Living was extremely cheap in Hong Kong in the pre-war days and there was consequently more incentive to spend money outside the Club. Moreover, there were Naval Canteens at Weihaiwei which was used as a summer base for the Squadron, and a Canteen at Shameen in Canton for the use of the personnel of gunboats employed on the West River. Many of the gunboats on the Yangtze were refitted at Shanghai and seldom appeared in Hong Kong. There was also a Naval Staff at Hankow which was used as a base for Yangtze river gunboats.

In effect too, the Fleet, apart from those ships refitting, was never in force at Hong Kong except during the winter. Yet, despite all the outside attractions and with many ships away from Hong Kong for long periods, it became increasingly evident that the Club was not large enough to cope with the needs of such a Fleet. To meet this pressing demand, the Architects of the Club were instructed to prepare plans for the addition of a new wing to the Club, and for an additional floor on the top of the existing building. The Hong Kong Government was also approached and it was tentatively agreed that the plot of land adjacent to the Theatre—then used as a sand dump by the Government—should be purchased by the Club and a 7-storied building erected on it. The Chief Manager of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corp. was approached and, without hesitation, stated that the Bank would guarantee an overdraft of \$1,000,000 to enable these projects to be accomplished.

All the plans prepared by the Architects were carefully discussed, and it was decided to proceed. The idea was to allocate the new wing of the building for the use of Chief & Petty Officers, and others of similar rank. The existing building would be retained for the exclusive use of junior ratings. The existing kitchen was to be fully modernised, and Messrs. C. E. Warren & Co., Ltd., of Hong Kong, produced plans, specifications and prices for this work.

## T H E   W A R

Then came rumours of war and, on 3rd September, 1939, Europe was once again plunged into a major war. This entailed suspension of all plans for the enlargement and modernisation of the Club, and from then onward the Club settled down to a lean period, with a greatly depleted Fleet and service personnel to maintain it. However, the Club carried on and, although the turnover was somewhat reduced, it continued to show a profit for 1939, 1940 and 1941.

The Bank overdraft had, however, increased to about \$140,000. This was brought about by the fact that, realising that stocks of Beer, Wines and Spirits would be almost unobtainable from England during the war, it was decided to build up a large reserve stock to ensure ample supplies for the next two or three years. This policy was adopted to keep the Club a going concern during the European War, and enable it to act as a Supply Depot for those Units of the China Fleet still in Pacific Waters.

The year 1940 brought rumours of increased Japanese war activity in the Far East and, on 1st July, 1940 the evacuation of British women and children from Hong Kong took place. The following twelve months saw Hong Kong preparing for war and, if such an event happened, the China Fleet Club was designed to play an important part in the history of the Colony.

Conferences were held, and the Club was selected as the first Headquarters of the Royal Navy, being required, in particular, to accommodate the Officers and Ship's Company of H.M.S. "Tamar" at the first sign of hostilities. Plans were discussed and finally approved for this eventuality.

The Chinese compradore was instructed to purchase, and maintain, a three months' supply of foodstuffs, and to keep this stock in reserve against any emergency.

The Club's Theatre was requisitioned by the Naval Authorities, and large quantities of Victualling Stores were transferred from the Kowloon Victualling Yard and stored there. These stores were subsequently returned to Kowloon after being stored in the Club for a period of about four months.

The arrival of the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, Air Marshal Sir Brooke Popham, brought the Club into the lime-light once again. At his request, certain ladies remaining in the Colony formed a committee with Lady MacGregor, wife of the Chief Justice of the Colony, as President, for the entertainment of Servicemen in Hong Kong. The Theatre was placed at the disposal of this Committee and weekly dances were arranged. In addition to this, a Sewing Committee of some thirty ladies used the Theatre for their sewing meetings at which bandages, etc., were made for despatch to the Fighting Forces of our Allies.

In November, 1941, a Canadian contingent of 2000 Officers and Men arrived in the Colony, and the Club again became a busy centre. The bars were full every night, and men waited in long queues to obtain a table in the dining rooms. Prices of beer, wines and spirits in the Colony had increased considerably, but the Club continued to maintain its policy of providing Servicemen with cheap meals and drinks. The following shows the difference in prices charged:—

	at China Fleet Club	elsewhere
Beer, Draught .....	45 cents per pt.	\$1.00 per pint
Beer, bottled .....	90 „ „ bot. (qt.)	1.60 „ bottle
Whisky .....	50 „ „ tot.	2.00 „ tot.
Brandy .....	70 „ „ tot.	2.50 „ tot.
Gin .....	40 „ „ tot.	2.00 „ tot.
Rum .....	50 „ „ tot.	2.00 „ tot.
Dinner (4 courses) .....	\$1.00	\$4.00 to \$5.00

Unfortunately this sudden increase in business only lasted for five weeks, for, on 8th December, 1941 the Japanese declared War, and Hong Kong was brought into the conflict.

### THE BATTLE OF HONGKONG

At 5.15 on the morning of Monday, 8th December, 1941, the Manager of the Club was informed by the Executive Officer, H.M.S. TAMAR, that England was at war with Japan and was instructed to put the War Operation Orders into immediate effect. This meant clearing the Club of all Service ratings on shore leave and preparing to accommodate the Officers and Ship's Company of H.M.S. Tamar in the Club, as one Unit, on a war footing. Further orders received that morning necessitated preparing accommodation for R.N.R., R.N.V.R., and H.K.R.N.V.R. Officers and ratings, and an unknown number of

Chinese. Further orders issued stated that all Officers and Men in uniform, civilians attached to Naval establishments, and Chinese ratings who reported at the Club were to be accommodated and victualled. All meals needed were to be supplied by the Compradore under the instructions of the Manager of the Club.

Accommodation in the Club was allocated as follows:—

<b>Ground Floor</b>	H.M.S. Tamar—Sick Bay & First Aid Station. Two bars to remain and to be opened in accordance with the Rules of the Club.
<b>First Floor</b>	Chief & P.O's Quarters became the Wardroom Officers' Mess and Recreation Rooms; Office for Executive Officer, Tamar; Captain & Ship's Office; Victualling Office, & Base Accountant Officer's Cabin. One dining room for Officers and Chief & P.O's, and the second Dining Room for all other Ratings and Chinese.
<b>Second Floor</b>	Cabin for Commander, H.M.S. Tamar. Remainder, Club Store rooms; Chinese staff rooms, and Laundry.
<b>3rd &amp; 4th Floors</b>	Ship's Company, Tamar, and Gunnery Office.
<b>Fifth Floor</b>	Officers' accommodation.
<b>Theatre</b>	Engineers' & Carpenters' Shops.

By 7.30 a.m. on 8th December, 1941, the China Fleet Club was on a war footing, and everything had been prepared according to plan.

The Staff were put into three watches, Fire-parties organised, hoses attached to water mains and laid out, and the A.R.P. organisation posted. Portuguese Gun Crews arrived and manned the guns on the roof of the Club. These men were members of the H.K.V.D.C. and they remained in the Club until 21st December, 1941.

At approximately 8 a.m. on Monday, 8th December, the Japanese struck the Colony, and Kai Tak Aerodrome and ships in the harbour were attacked from the air. Bombs were dropped in the harbour near the Club but no damage was sustained that day.



The Ship's Company of H.M.S. Tamar moved into the Club according to plan, and the Officers occupied the billets allocated to them. The following shows the numbers of Officers, Men and Chinese accommodated and fed in the Club from 8th December to 11th December, 1941, both days inclusive:—

8th December, 1941 .....	Officers and Men — 250
9th       "       " .....	Officers and Men — 287
10th       "       " .....	Men — 265;       Chinese — 120
11th       "       " .....	Men — 277;       Chinese — 154

On 10th December, 1941, the Wardroom Officers' Messman, Ah Choy, took over the victualling of the Officers, sharing the Club's kitchen and utensils, etc. with the Compradore.

During the next few days the Colony was subjected to intense aerial bombing, and long-range shelling from land and sea, but the Club remained undamaged.

On the morning of 9th December, two lighters arrived at the Pier outside the Club and were loaded with beer, wines, spirits, bedding and part of the three months' reserve of foodstuffs from the Compradore's stores. These supplies were then taken to Aberdeen and placed in the Aberdeen Industrial School, where a branch of the China Fleet Club had been established, in the temporary charge of Petty Officer William Thynne, the Assistant Manager of the Club.

On the morning of Thursday, 11th December, 1941, the British position on the Mainland had become precarious, and it was decided to evacuate all the remaining troops to the Island of Hong Kong. By this time, the Club had come into the danger zone to such an extent that it was decided to evacuate Officers and Men to Aberdeen, and this operation was completed by 5 p.m. on Thursday, 11th December. That night, the Manager of the Club received orders to report to the Aberdeen Industrial School to attend a conference regarding the maintenance of China Fleet Club supplies for the Officers and Men then billeted in the School. On returning to the Club on Friday morning, 12th December, he found that the Leading Seamen's Bar had been broken open and completely looted, while the Manager's Quarters and Office had also been broken into and ransacked. A report was immediately made to the Commodore, Hong Kong, and the Commissioner of Police, the latter sending two detectives to the Club to investigate.

During the next few days, the Engineers' Shop and Carpenters' Shop were transferred to Aberdeen and, following an urgent request for beds and bedding and other stores, the following were sent to Aberdeen Industrial School from the Club:—400 beds mattresses; 800 sheets; 800 pillows; 1,000 blankets; 800 counterpanes; 1,000 towels; 1,600 pillowslips; 50 rattan chairs; and a further consignment of beer, wines and spirits, and cigarettes. These stores were transferred by lorry, the Manager of the Club making daily trips to and from Aberdeen.

After the evacuation of Service personnel to Aberdeen, the Club became a Centre for the accommodation of troops manning the pill-boxes on the Praya, drawn from the Middlesex and Royal Scots, and Indian and Portuguese Regiments.

In addition, Naval and Army personnel were supplied with meals at all times of the day and night during the Battle of Hong Kong, and accommodation was also given to crews landed from disabled ships, and from ships sunk in the vicinity of Hong Kong. It should be noted that at least 80 per cent of the Chinese staff remained loyal to the Club until 22nd December, but as the position was then desperate, they left to seek safety elsewhere. As far as possible, the "boys" were paid half-a-month's pay before leaving the Club.

During the actual Battle of Hong Kong, the Club received a direct hit, a 6-inch shell penetrating the main wall of the Reading Room on the Ground Floor, passing through two more walls, and landing outside the Leading Seamen's Bar, but luckily it failed to explode. The markings on the shell bore the date 1941 and showed that it was of British manufacture. The south side of the Club also suffered slight damage when a small bomb hit the parapet on the roof, and tore away water and sanitary pipes. Another shell passed through the parapet wall of the Theatre roof on the East side, and here again the shell failed to explode.

The last visit paid to the Club by the Manager during the Battle was on 23rd December, 1941, when further supplies were transferred to Aberdeen.

The Branch of the Club at Aberdeen Industrial School functioned throughout the Battle of Hong Kong and was the Distributing Centre whence beer, wines, spirits and cigarettes were supplied to Naval Craft operating in the vicinity of Aberdeen and Repulse Bay. The Bar was kept open and drinks and cigarettes were supplied to all Naval and Army personnel accommodated in the Industrial School, and to

all personnel who came down from the firing lines for rest periods. The Assistant Manager of the Club was detailed to join a fighting unit, but shortly afterwards was sent to Queen Mary Hospital where he remained for some months.

During the last week of the Battle of Hong Kong, the Industrial School was evacuated by nearly all the fighting forces, who retired to the hills, but a great many returned to the School within 48 hours. By this time the Japanese were occupying Repulse Bay.

On 25th December, 1941, orders were received at Aberdeen to "Cease fire—retain all guns and ammunition", followed by a further order to "Return all guns and ammunition to store". The Battle of Hong Kong was over—His Excellency The Governor of Hong Kong had surrendered the Colony to the Japanese Military Forces.

### THE OCCUPATION

At 6 p.m. that day, the Manager of the Club was ordered to destroy all Beer, Wines and Spirits—the property of the Club at Aberdeen, and from that hour until 6 a.m. of 26th December, the following stocks were destroyed:—

500 Cases Beer	(48 bottles per case)
75 „ Brandy	(12 „ „ „ )
75 „ Whisky	(12 „ „ „ )
100 „ Gin	(12 „ „ „ )
75 „ Sherry	(12 „ „ „ )
70 „ Rum	(12 „ „ „ )

Also, about 50,000 cigarettes were sent out to the British and Canadian Forces at Aberdeen.

With the exception of a small party, all Service personnel were transferred to the Royal Naval Dockyard, Hong Kong, as Prisoners-of-war.

On 27th December, 1941, the Japanese stated that the Naval prisoners-of-war would be accommodated in the China Fleet Club, and the Manager was sent to the Club to arrange for their accommodation, but was refused admittance by the Japanese Military Forces who, in the meantime, had taken over the Club. Just then, five lorries filled with Chinese women arrived under Japanese escort outside the Club. These women had been collected by the Japanese and were put into the Club to work for them.

After six months had elapsed the Japanese Military Forces evacuated the Club, and the Japanese Naval Authorities took over control. Naval Officers and men of the Japanese Navy were accommodated in the Club until the British Navy re-occupied Hong Kong in August, 1945.

The Theatre of the Club was used chiefly as a School for Japanese Naval Officers, and the Restaurant was re-opened under Japanese control to cater for the needs of the Japanese residents of Wanchai.

During one period of the Occupation, all brass materials were stripped from the Club by the Japanese, and extensive looting of Club property took place.

The Club suffered very little damage during the bombing raids on Hong Kong by Allied Forces.

To return to the financial side of the Club's affairs—the Bank overdraft on 1st April, 1935, was approximately \$368,000, but although the Club had experienced a lean period since the beginning of the war in December 1941 stocks of liquor worth over \$150,000 were held by the Club, the overdraft had been reduced to \$128,990, and all other debts on the Club had been paid off.

## THE RE-OCCUPATION

When the re-occupying Forces entered Hong Kong Harbour on 30th August, 1945, they found the Club still standing. The China Fleet Club had a reputation amongst Naval personnel, and for those who were seeing it for the first time it must have caused considerable interest. For those who had served on the China Station and had known the Club before the war, it meant that the Club could again be used and raised their hopes of its early restoration.

From a closer inspection of the Club, little structural damage appeared to have been done. Only two shell holes could be seen but there were many broken windows. Also, the floors of the Club were exceedingly dirty and the ranges in the kitchen were broken. Meanwhile little could be done to the Club and as its future had not yet been decided, the building was entrusted to H.M.S. "Vengeance"—Captain D. M. L. Neame, D.S.O., R.N.

It was fortunate that the former Honorary Secretary & Treasurer (Commander (S) C. S. B. Hickman, R.N.) was in the Colony at this time. Commander Hickman had been interned as a prisoner-of-war and had voluntarily remained in Hong Kong for a short period in

order to assist in the re-organisation of the base and advise on the future of the Club. It was Commander Hickman's view that the Club should be turned over to N.A.A.F.I. for one year; he thought that the greater resources of the N.A.A.F.I. would enable the Club to be quickly restored. This then was the view expressed officially by the Commodore-in-Charge, Hong Kong (Commodore D. H. Everett, C.B.E., D.S.O.) to the Flag Officer, Western Area (Rear-Admiral D. B. Fisher, C.B.), the Senior Officer present. This view was not, however, generally supported and, as the result of representations, the Flag Officer Western Area decided that since the Club belonged to the Fleet, the opinion of the men should be obtained, and at his direction a meeting of representatives of all ships present was held in the Club, on Saturday, 6th October, 1945.

The Flag Officer, Western Area attended personally to open the Meeting. He explained briefly the position of the China Fleet Club in pre-war days and the requirements it would have to meet in the future. He particularly stressed the importance of any decision that would be made by the Officers and Men present and that on their decision would rest not only the welfare of the ships then present in harbour but also the China Fleet of the future. Admiral Fisher then turned over the Chair to Commodore D. H. Everett, C.B.E., D.S.O., and withdrew.

The names of the ships who sent representatives to the meeting were—H.M. Ships Montclare, Armada, Redpole, 27th Destroyer Flotilla, Pioneer, Kelantan, Diligence, Venerable, Aorangi, Resource, Artifex, Anson, Erne, Tamar, Hogue, Deersound and Flamborough Head.

In addition to Commodore Everett, the following Officers attended: Captain E. M. C. Barraclough, O.B.E., R.N., Captain (S) H. H. Simpson, C.B.E., R.N., Commander (S) C. S. B. Hickman, R.N., Commander (S) W. B. C. C. Evans, R.N., Commander (S) E. J. Webb, R.N. and Lieut. (S) C. D. Pilkington, R.N.V.R.

The Chairman explained that he first wished to define the duties of the Committee which had assembled in accordance with Flag Officer Western Area's directions. The following two proposals were made:—

- (a) That the Committee should be the Port Canteen Committee and deal with the China Fleet Club in addition to its other duties.
- (b) That the Committee should be merely the emergency committee of the China Fleet Club.

These proposals were voted on. The first was rejected and the second carried on the casting vote of the Chairman.

The Commodore-in-Charge's proposals were then outlined by Cdr. (S) Hickman who said that all the floors above the first would be requisitioned for the accommodation of naval personnel; the lower two floors would be left for Club activities. If NAAFI took over the whole building at a later date, they would be in a position to install beds, billiards tables, etc. at very short notice. The manager of the Club was in Australia, re-cuperating from the effects of confinement as a prisoner-of-war and would not be back for some months. The Club's overdraft was \$128,990, and it seemed unlikely that sufficient stocks would be available to effect a profit and thus reduce the overdraft.

Commander (Sp.) G. H. Rogers, the NAAFI Representative, said the rebate if the N.A.A.F.I. took over the Club would be in the neighbourhood of £5000. a year.

A discussion followed and the representatives were of the opinion that the Club should be run as pre-war: "by the Fleet for the Fleet". It was thought that much voluntary work would be done by ships' companies and that Canteen Committees would vote sums of money from their Funds to help in the rehabilitation of the Club.

It was considered that this proposal merited very careful consideration and it was resolved to appoint a sub-committee to consider the matter further and to hold another meeting a week later. In the meantime, Flag Officer Western Area informed the Commander-in-Chief, B.P.F., of the meeting's decision and asked that Admiralty be approached to make a grant or a loan of £10,000 for the purpose of rehabilitating the Club. This was done but Admiralty regretted that they could not provide financial assistance since it was the policy in war-time for N.A.A.F.I. to undertake and run Service clubs.

At a meeting held on Saturday, 13th October, 1945, the sub-committee's report was read as follows: "If the Admiralty will do the same for the Fleet Club as they will do for N.A.A.F.I., and the Commander-in-Chief will give shipping space for the Club, similar to that given to N.A.A.F.I., it seems practicable for the Fleet to run the Club."

This report was adopted unanimously and a General Committee formed. The constitution of the General Committee was as follows:—

The Commodore, Hong Kong (representing the Commander-in-Chief)—Chairman.

The Captain of the Fleet.

Captain (Administration), H.M.S. Tamar.

The Fleet Supply Officer.

The Fleet R.M. Officer.

The Staff Supply Officer to Commodore, H.K.—Hon. Sec. & Treas.

The 2 Trustees (Commodore, Hong Kong, and the General Manager, Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.)

Lower Deck Representatives:—

1 from each Cruiser and above.

1 from each Repair or Depot Ship.

1 from each Destroyer Flotilla.

1 from H.M.S. Tamar (representing Shore establishments).

1 from Escort Forces (including Escort Maintenance Ships).

1 from Minesweepers (including M/S Maintenance Ships).

1 from Submarine Depot Ship.

1 from each S/M Flotilla.

1 from ships present, not included above,  
with complement of over 500.

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With the formation of this Committee, immediate action was taken to get the Club organised. In this connection, the Club was fortunate to have, for a few months, the assistance of Lieutenant-Commander (S) G. B. Hutchings, R.N.R., who did much valuable work on the secretarial and accountant sides of the Club, in addition to making arrangements for the supply of furniture etc.

The N.A.A.F.I. started to sell beer in the Club on 15th Sept., 1945; the ration at that time being 1000 bottles per day. An allocation of tickets was made to each ship and beer supplied to those fortunate enough to hold a ticket.

The expectation that voluntary work would be put in by ships was fulfilled, especially by the Artisans of Repair and Depot ships such as "Resource" and "Artifex". The kitchen and restaurants were the first to receive attention and the first meals were served on 2nd November, 1945.

The first-cinema show took place on 18th October, 1945, films supplied by the R.N. Film Corporation being shown.

On 6th November, 1945, the Club took over the sale of beer from N.A.A.F.I. The ration by this time had been increased to 4800 bottles per day. Towards the end of November, local beer came on the market and the sales increased by leaps and bounds. Spirits, however, did not become available in the Club until 25th December, 1946.

At this time there were approximately 25,000 naval personnel in Hong Kong and, in consequence, the Club made a large turnover, with the result that, by 7th December, 1945, it was possible to pay off the overdraft of \$128,990 which was found to be owing when the Colony was re-occupied. This was in no small measure due to the quick response of ships to the signal originated by the Commander-in-Chief, in which he suggested that ships might like to contribute from their Canteen Funds towards the rehabilitation of the Club.

The ships and establishments which contributed were:—

H.M. Ships Montclare; Kelantan (2 donations); Enchantress; Tamar, Guardian; Deersound; Resource (2 donations); Woolloomooloo; Kempenfelt; Artifex; Anson; Ariadne; Diligence; Erne; Plym; Berry Head; Hart; Tuscan; Manxman; R.N. Canteen, Colombo; Nabsford; Chief and P.O's Mess, Nabsford; Pepys; R.N. Hospital, Sydney; (Seamen's and Sick Berth Funds); Adamant; Central Amenities Gift Fund, Sydney; Bermuda; Chief and P.O's Mess, Vengeance; Fleet Club, Colombo; Arbiter; Teazer; Nabberley; Implacable; Golden Hind; Unicorn; R.N. Canteen, Brisbane; Furneaux; Nabbington; Flamborough Head; Swiftsure; Spragge; Argoanut; Duke of York (2 donations); Redpole; Speaker; Troubridge; Reaper; R.N. Camp, Coolangatta (2 donations); Tjitjalenka; Glory; Bonaventure; Nabstock; Lothian; Black Swan; King George V; R.N. Port Canteen, Sydney; Pioneer; Sultan; Nabswick; Tyne; Aorangi; Rame Head; R.N. Base, Harwich; Woodcock; Braganza; Barfleur, and H.M.I.S. Cauvery.

As the result of their generosity, a total of \$135,920 was handed over to the Club.

In addition to these gifts of money, the British Centre, at Sydney, contributed a gift of furniture and equipment to the total of £(A)1,423.

### 1 9 4 6

With so many ratings using the Club, the need for expansion became pressing and the Commodore arranged for the second floor to be surrendered. This was taken over on 1st January, 1946, and used solely for the accommodation of Chief and Petty Officers, the ground and first floors being allocated to Junior ratings.



By February 1946, four billiard tables had been obtained and these were allocated equally to the Chief and Petty Officers and the Junior Ratings. Although the charge for play was not high, all four tables had been paid for within a year.

In the cinema, three changes of programme were made weekly and three performances held daily. This hall was also used for dances and boxing. Printed programmes of events were published monthly.

Meanwhile steps had been taken to renovate the Club. It was not done on a lavish scale, the Committee reasoning that with such large numbers using the Club it would be bound to receive severe treatment. In consequence it was decided to conserve the money ear-marked for rehabilitation until the Fleet had reduced and materials had become more easily obtainable. This view proved to be correct, and austerity was the rule during 1946.

#### 1 9 4 7

By December 1946, reductions had taken place in the Fleet and accommodation had been found in the Dockyard for both naval ratings and dockyard employees who had been billeted in the Club. Plans for sleeping accommodation were thus able to be made and all-night leave became a possibility. Redecoration began from the top floor, comprising 109 cabins, and continued downwards to the fourth and third floors. The requisitioned portion of the Club was finally released on 14th January, 1947 and the first all-night leave was given on 19th February, 1947. Accommodation then allowed for 504 to sleep ashore. Meanwhile, redecoration had progressed and was virtually completed in 1948.

#### 1 9 4 8

The finances of the Club were in a very healthy state, the Bank overdraft had been paid off, and the balance in hand was in the neighbourhood of \$450,000, despite the fact that \$267,000 had been spent on rehabilitation and redecoration, which, with the exception of a few items, was almost completed. The outstanding items included the replacement of the double-tier beds by single ones and the overhauling of the drinking water system on the dormitory floors.

A claim for \$291,000 in respect of damage and losses during the war was made during this year. However, no general war damage was paid in Hong Kong, and the Club received only some \$40,000 compensation in 1949 for bedding and furniture requisitioned when the Club was evacuated to Aberdeen.

It was realised during 1948 year that the Club's turnover would be considerably reduced if so many ships were withdrawn from the Station, and if conditions remained as they were. In 1948, therefore, the Club had to make every effort to economise.

This enforced economy was unfortunate, because the Club had ambitions to make a swimming pool on the piece of land between the Missions to Seamen and the Club, and the Hong Kong Government was actually considering whether the ground could be made available. Because of the necessity for economy, however, the swimming pool scheme had to be shelved.

### 1 9 4 9 — 1 9 5 1

The reduction in income which had been feared in 1948 did not materialise although active steps were taken by the Committee to acquire other sources. A disastrous fire in 1948 destroyed most of the film stores in Hong Kong and Mr. W. J. Waghorn, who was manager at that time, arranged for the building of nine film vaults on the roof of the Club. These have been let continuously since December, 1948, and, having paid for themselves, bring in valuable income. The Club's tender for the contract for the censoring of films in the Colony was also accepted and, although this duty will eventually be taken over by the Government, the Club has profited considerably for a period of over three years. The restrictions on membership were also relaxed, and honorary membership was made available to many more sections of the European community.

The fact that the income of the Club did not diminish as anticipated was due to the situation in Korea which led to the active intervention of the United Nations. This unforeseen operation necessitated strong reinforcements being sent to the Colony. Receipts, which had dwindled with the removal of the Naval Headquarters to Singapore, rose again rapidly as the small fleet in the harbour and the garrison were strengthened, and it proved possible to carry out many improvements. Probably the most obvious and appreciated of these was the purchase of new cinema machines in November, 1949, which were shipped from United Kingdom in H.M. Ships UNICORN and TRIUMPH. Many other major items were dealt with including the kitchen which badly needed modernising, the restaurants, the purchase of lockers for cabins and dormitories, complete electrical rewiring, the painting of the inside and outside of the building and the purchase of the beds, bedding and furniture for which the Club had been paying rent since 1947.

On many occasions the Club was required to billet large numbers of naval (including allied) personnel. This situation is being remedied gradually and, as it is unlikely the Club will have to accommodate such large numbers again, it may be possible to substitute single beds for the double-tiered as envisaged in the remarks for 1948. The income from billeting will of course also gradually disappear.

Conversion of the heating and hot water system from coal to oil fuel is now complete and modifications to the lifts is in hand. Much remains to be done to make the Club ideal, but with continued support there is no doubt the amenities will be improved and extended, and that the Club's contribution to the Far East Central Amenities Fund can be maintained.

The important matter of the ground between the Club and the Missions to Seamen also came to a head at the end of 1951. Since the swimming pool project in 1948, various other plans, some involving buildings of up to five storeys, had been considered. However, these plans all had to be abandoned when the Hong Kong Government announced that the ground was going to be used for a T.B. Clinic. The Commodore represented the strong objections of the Committee to the Government authorities, who then agreed to consider selling the land to the Committee provided the Club Boys' quarters, which encroached on a third of it and to which the Club had no legal right, were rebuilt. The Government further agreed that the land on which the Boys' quarters were situated would then be given to the Club, and not included in the rest of area for sale.

The Commander-in-Chief asked the Fleet by signal whether it was desired to purchase this ground for a possible figure of half-a-million dollars, which was all the Club's available assets: if the Club did not buy, any commercial undertaking, except a factory, might spring up. The reply was unanimously in favour of purchase by the Club. The Government then decided, however, that the ground must be used for a Government garage and could not be sold at all. An assurance was given that in the unlikely event of this land ever being put up for sale in the future the Club would be given the first option to buy. The Fleet was again informed by signal of this development.

The position thus stands that no T.B. Clinic or private commercial concern will be situated on this land, and the Club will not have to borrow money to develop it as would have been the case had

it been successful in purchasing it. In rebuilding the Boys' quarters, effort will also be made to include extra amenities for the Club, and this more modest project may well prove wiser in the long run than raising an overdraft for developing much more ambitious schemes.

## PRESENT FACILITIES AND ORGANISATION

The following accommodation and facilities are now available:—

<b>Ground Floor</b>	Reception Desk; Gift Shop; Library; Junior Ratings' Bar and Billiards Room; Junior Ratings' Lounge and Cocktail Bar and Library.
<b>First Floor</b>	Chief and Petty Officers' Lounge, Billiards Room, Bar, Cocktail Bar and Restaurant. Barber's Shops and Junior Ratings' Restaurant.
<b>Second Floor</b>	Locker Room; Party Room; Laundry; Baths and Sleeping accommodation for 90 Chief and Petty Officers and ratings.
<b>3rd &amp; 4th Floors</b>	Sleeping accommodation in dormitories; Baths and Showers.
<b>Fifth Floor</b>	Sleeping accommodation in cubicles—total 106, allocated as follows:—Chief and P.O.'s—63; Junior ratings—43; any cabins allocated, not booked before 1800, are disposed of irrespective of rank.
<b>Theatre</b>	Cinema Shows twice nightly except on special occasions.

A full programme including other entertainments is issued each month.

**STAFF:** The Manager, who is a C.P.O. Writer (Pensioner) is borne on the books of H.M.S. "TAMAR" and receives additional remuneration from Club funds.

The Deputy Manager is an active service Chief or Petty Officer, or Sergeant R.M., borne on the books of H.M.S. "TAMAR" and also receives additional remuneration from Club funds. This post is held for 2 years, but may not be renewed.

Two Assistant Managers are civilians and their salaries are paid entirely from Club funds.

The Night Superintendent—when one is employed—is a civilian and his salary is entirely paid from Club funds.

As regards the Chinese staff, approximately 100 Club boys, including technicians, are employed in the Club and a further 80 in the restaurants.

The Deputy and Assistant Managers work 24 hours about in order to ensure that a member of the managerial staff is always present in the Club. When a Night Superintendent is employed he takes over at midnight and remains on duty until 0900.

In order to assist in the orderly running of the Club, members of the Committee attend each night taking turns as "Duty Committeemen." They wear a disc on their coats and assist the managerial staff in preserving good order. At the same time, they represent the Fleet and listen to complaints or suggestions brought forward during their turn of duty.

Any complaint they receive is first investigated; the Duty Manager is then approached in order, if possible, to rectify the cause of the complaint. If the Duty Manager is unable to satisfy the complainant, the matter is brought to the attention of the Manager. The Duty Committeeman sleeps in the Club and is provided with meals whilst on duty. In order that junior ratings may feel that they are adequately represented, a "Duty Leading Hand" also attends nightly. The Duty Leading Hands are selected from a roster of volunteers and they assist the managerial staff and Duty Committeemen in their duties. In this connection, ships arriving on the Station are invited to forward names of volunteers from Leading rates for this voluntary duty so that the rosters may be maintained. They, too, sleep in the Club on their duty night and are provided with meals whilst on duty.

Members of the General Committee are elected by their ships' Welfare Committees. Whilst so elected, they attend all monthly general meetings, the agenda for which is compiled from items received from the welfare committees. Meetings of the General Committee are held in the Club on the first Monday in each month at 1030. Items for the agenda must be forwarded to the Manager by the 20th of the preceding month. The object of this is to enable the House Committee, which is elected by the General Committee and consists of three representatives from sea-going ships and one from

shore establishments, to consider the items sent in and report their findings in order that a correct decision on each item may be reached at the subsequent general meeting. Minutes of General Committee meetings are circulated to the Fleet as soon as possible after each meeting has been held.

No decision on a major matter of policy is made at a General Meeting unless it has been fully ventilated throughout the Fleet.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion the Committee wish to point out that this booklet was prepared because it was felt that many men knew little about the Club or their responsibilities as members.

Members should bear in mind that the China Fleet Club belongs to the men of the Royal Navy and their successors, and that while they serve on the Far East Station they are the local representatives for those serving elsewhere.

It is, therefore, their duty as active members to ensure that the Club is run in accordance with the general wishes of the men of the Royal Navy and that its interests and future are safeguarded. To achieve this, members should follow closely the affairs of the Club, keep in touch with its activities by reading the minutes circulated and, when necessary, make their views known to their ships' representatives so that they can be recorded.

This is especially important when matters of Club policy are referred to the Fleet for decision, and all members should give them their careful consideration so that their opinions can be represented at the General Committee meetings.

Members should also regard themselves as the custodians of the Club and see that it is preserved and not wantonly damaged by irresponsible elements. Not least, they should adhere to the rules and assist the Club's officials in enforcing them.

The Club rules are made for the benefit of the whole membership and with the object of making the Club a pleasant and comfortable place for the men of the Fleet to use when they are off duty. This object will never be achieved if they are allowed to lapse and the Club is permitted to become a bear-garden.

Great efforts were made to create the Club and even greater efforts made to restore it to its present state. Many improvements have been made and a high standard of comfort is aimed at. This cannot be maintained if the Club is subjected to ill-treatment and rough conduct.

The men of the Fleet owe a great deal to their predecessors for such a fine Club and it is up to them to preserve and run it with the same strength of purpose, always bearing in mind that the Club is not merely for their passing benefit but for all those who follow in their footsteps.

THE END.

CHINA FLEET CLUB,

Hong Kong, 1st January, 1952.

