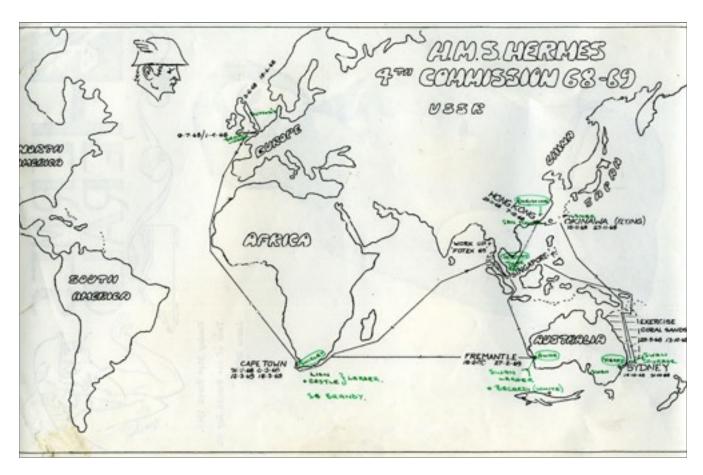
HMS Hermes 4th Commission

1968 - 1969



(Supplemented with photos, explanations, data and re-assessments 47 years later)



Copied from page 257, this is the inside page of the Hermes Herald Monday 31 March 1969 Issue 205/4

Today many ship's crews are turned-over on a rolling system; of some joining and some leaving, ensuring some experience remains with the ship whilst always having inexperienced staff in the process of finding their way around.

Previously a ship might go into re-fit and 100% of the crew changed over; [less those personnel who requested to remain with the ship]. As a result of which a ship would put to sea requiring a shake-down of every conceivable event and putting the entire crew through a repetition of exercises until they and the ship was considered 'fully worked-up'. The ship and crew would be deployed for a period of time; during which time records would be kept of: the route taken by the ship, photos and stories of places visited and social / charitable / humanitarian events which took place. Also photos of the crew and stories of the various departments within the ship were recorded. Toward the end of the commission all this information would be collated and used to create a book to be given to every member of the crew as a permanent record of their place in the trip undertaken by their ship.

A choice was put to the crew of HMS Hermes in 1968 to be resolved by a vote.

1) Have a commissioning book at the end of the deployment. Or,

2) Have a one pint silver-plated tankard engraved "HMS Hermes" to be collected in Hong-Kong whilst we were deployed.

On page 236 there is a photo of me holding my tankard on the day of my 19th birthday.

I wanted a book to keep my memories alive and share with my family. However I was in the minority. The tankard was given out. I no longer have mine; it was a poor thing which tarnished and stained in use.

And so I produced my own; albeit personal, journal. My own HMS Hermes 4th Commission Book.

The journal was produced on a day by day basis as was the Hermes Herald which was a source of data about which I was able to utilise and /or add to with my personal experiences.

To give credit to others help in producing my journal I wish to acknowledge.

- 1) The Hermes Herald; a daily paper produced on board. This was the source of sea-chart detail which provided me with the means to relate the route taken by the ship. Also it provided articles of historic interest of places we passed which was provided by people on board. And it was a source of jokes, cartoons and even pictures of girls [What the national, Red-Top paper, the Sun, calls page three girls]
- 2) The ships photographic department which produced so many pictures which I was able to purchase; of activities aboard the ship and places we visited.
- 3) Newspaper articles; I cut-out and pasted from such places as the, Cape Times and Cape Argus from Cape Town and the Straits Times from Singapore.
- 4) Scribblings inserted along the way and articles written, at the end of the Journal, by mess mates.

When I came to copy, to computer format, I introduced additional italicised blue text where I felt Naval Slang and jargon needed further explanation. Further to that, access to the 'world wide web' allowed me to find pictures and associated text of other vessels with which we were in company from time to time. As the endeavour to enhance my Journal was for purely personal use I never considered any Copyright aspects when copying in pictures and text. In respect of copyright issues I have deleted most of the pictures of ships from personal and organisations collections, which in any case are available to view by anyone wishing to see the particular vessels.

Further blue text was added when I found text now available to the public regarding enhancements to the Journal e.g. German war records [South Atlantic] and a very enlightening news article regarding the Diego Garcia Atoll [Indian Ocean] written by journalist John Pilger, and others.

The following are contained in my HMS Hermes 4th Commission Journal

18 drawings of subject matter relative to the 4th commission

55 sea charts, mostly hand drawn. 72,802, miles from start to finish.

150 photographs: Official, personal, and post-cards and post-card stubs.

6 newspaper articles: referring to visits by, HMS Hermes.

Many cartoons; primarily gained from the Hermes Herald, but from others sources as well.

265 foolscap size pages hand written: About 69,000 words.

Word document with additional text: 374 pages utilising: 71,800 words in Arial size 11 font text.

For photos and records of Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships referred to visit: http://www.historicalrfa.org/rfa-ship-classes

For additional photos and records of Royal Navy and other ships referred to visit: http://www.worldnavalships.com

Introduction

Born in 1950 in Solihull, Warwickshire, but brought-up on the North-East coast, with no links to any of the armed forces, joining the Royal Navy was not a natural or expected choice of career. I was an avid reader and had read, at an early age such books as: Treasure Island and Kidnapped, by Robert Louis Stevenson, The Coral Island by RM Ballantyne and the entire, Hornblower series by C S Forester. Captain James Cook [1700's] was a prominent figure of local history at the fishing port of Whitby and more locally at Staithes, just along the coast from where I lived. Even so I can think of no single factor determining my choice, but by the time I was 11 years old I had made my mind up to join the Royal Navy and never considered any other options. At a critical point in time my school was visited by the RN recruitment team who showed a movie-clip showing some Fleet Air Arm aircraft which approached an island at low level and proceeded to drop large, high explosive bombs with great visual impact. I thought to myself "I want some of that". I completed all the preliminary requirements and 4 months after my 15th birthday and just a few days after school broke-up for the summer holidays I had left home to start a new life at HMS Ganges. During the following two years I trained as a Naval Air Mechanic specialising in ordnance and consolidated my training with work done in workshops, on aircraft and a short time on a bombing range.

This record of my life starts in Portsmouth 30 August 1967. I was a Junior Naval Air Mechanic 1st Class; age 17 years and 5 months old, when I was drafted to join HMS Victorious, then in dry-dock undergoing a re-fit prior to a planned re-deployment to the Far-East; where the UK Government had maintained capital ships; deployed since the end of the last war. I did not know then that the future 4th commission was to be the last Carrier Force to be sent to the Far-East; due to military cut-backs; 'East of Suez'.

HMS Centaur

Commissioned: 17 Sept 1953. Designation R06

Operated: mostly in the Mediterranean and Far East.

Decommissioned: Dec 1965 and hulked as an accommodations ship, mostly for crews of carriers in

overhaul.

Stricken for disposal 1971.

Sold 11 Aug 1972 and subsequently scrapped.

In 1967 the Centaur was floating alongside in Portsmouth dockyard being used as an accommodation ship for the crew of HMS Victorious. I arrived in August 1967 and was billeted aboard her sharing the mess with those of us, 'Wafu's' intended as the next crew for HMS Victorious (the 'Vic') as well as a number of ratings who, having returned from the Far-East on the Victorious had applied to 're-commission' and stay with the ship for a second stint.

The accommodation afforded by the Centaur was very Spartan. There was no piped ventilation in our mess. During that summer the heat was oppressive within the ship and to aid a flow of fresh air into the mess-deck, powerful fans were set up on the weather deck with a great length of 'Lay-flat' polythene tubing which was connected to the fan and then routed like an enormous snake down into the messing areas and wound throughout the living/sleeping area with a few holes punctured here and there in the tube to provide fresh air. Over the course of a couple of days we would add to the holes, strategically, in the hope of getting a better share of the air on our own bunk space. The down side we discovered was; like the function of the perforations provided in toilet tissue, and on more than one occasion I recall the holes joining up during the night as the polythene tube ripped open. The rent which followed was a great rasping, fluttering noise which woke us with a start. You could not sleep with the noise and the tube had to be ripped down, leaving the mess to become much hotter and stuffier.

The forward heads (toilets) were the next eye opener for me; a row of about a dozen cubicles with doors, the size and in the style of Western saloons. When sitting on the toilet the privacy afforded, started at your knees and only came up to your shoulders; and so you could go about your ablutions in full view of each other and conduct conversations face to face with other heads users. I never ever acclimatised myself to the facility, though others would cheerfully engage in chatter, whilst 'trumping and dumping'.

Next on the learning curve for me and those like myself on their first ship was the phenomenon of cockroaches. One morning on entering the galley for breakfast I saw what I took to be the painted black bulkhead immediately behind the tea-urns. Only as I got closer could I discern the entire surface was a moving, mass of roaches.

Later the ship was treated to what we were told was an insecticidal "bomb" which effectively cleared the ship of the 'cockies'.

Duties for me included staying aboard the 'Vic' overnight as part of the Duty-Watch which entailed conducting a series of inspection rounds of various compartments of the ship to check for security or fire hazards as well as forming the fire fighting team.

HMS Victorious



HMS VICTORIOUS 1937-1969

HMS Victorious built by Vickers Armstrong on the Tyne. Laid down 4th of May 1937 Provided with protection against 500lb bombs and 6" shells; the flight deck between the lifts was 3" thick and the hangar walls were 4" thick. Victorious was struck by Kamikazes in 1945, but was operating aircraft again soon. HMS Victorious served with the British Pacific Fleet [BPF].

Victorious underwent major reconstruction from Oct 1950 - Jan 1958, the entire ship being rebuilt from hangar deck upwards with an angled flight deck and large increase in hangar height. She then was in Home and Far East service 1958-1968.

She was damaged by fire during a 1967 refit when it was decided that she should be decommissioned early. She was then stricken in July 1969, decommissioned and sold for scrap in 1969. She finally arrived at Faslane in July 1970 to be broken up.

Fire fighting became routine; though a daily fire exercise drill was part of the duty at some pre-determined point on the ship, attending real fire events was becoming quite frequent as small domestic fires resulting from waste matter heating, smouldering and finally igniting by welding activity even when separated by a steel bulkhead (conduction of heat) became a hazard of the refit.

I was part of the Air Ordnance workshop staff within the ship's Air Engineering Department (AED). A task that fell to us was the restoration of the vinyl deck coverings. This was a process we knew as 'Glift and Gleam'. Glift was a solvent used to return the vinyl back to original finish accompanying much 'elbow grease'. Once completed, one or more coats of a highly inflammable gloss lacquer, 'Gleam', (smelling like nail varnish) was applied. This was carried out with the doors closed because of the strong smell and we felt 'High' after working with it.

Lads joked that after working with Gleam you would need only a couple of pints of beer to drink, to get drunk.

I don't recall the day but at some point in the refit the accommodation and services became adequate for us to transfer from the Centaur to the Vic and I moved into the Armourer's mess on 4-deck, on the starboard side. Access to the mess was by way of a door let into the aft bulkhead of a vertical shaft, approached by a companionway from 3-deck above and 5-deck below.

In common with most mess decks the bunks were three high and I was pleased to find myself with a top bunk.

The bunk was secured from the deck-head by a strap at each end of the bed frame and had a two-foot long fold-away cot side. The cot-side was to prevent the occupant from falling out but I was to learn from another's misfortune that you could fall and drop, five to six feet to the deck.



NAM (O) Kit Colbeck with NAM(O) Paddy Taylor

NAM(O) 2nd Class, Kit Colbeck: a top bunk in the Armourers Mess HMS Victorious 1967 Note in the foreground of the overheads is square-shaped trunking which was the ventilation system The trunking had set in, adjustable nozzle vents called, 'Punkah Louvres'.

Two decks, directly above us was the Senior Rates mess which was to figure in the catastrophic fire soon. The fire was to claim the life of one of the crew; a CPO Chef, Nicholls.

On Saturday 11th November 1967 I was woken by the Tannoy radio. The BBC news reported that a fire had been raging aboard HMS Victorious for the past two hours with several appliances in attendance and I recall someone saying we were always having fires and asking if there was anything to listen to on the other channel; (yes our entertainment was the provision of two radio channels to choose from). The Tannoy was on the bulkhead close to my bunk and I 'clicked' the two-position switch over.

Then the magnitude sank in; that the announcement had been made on national radio at 0800 and that the fire was now two hours old. WHY had we not learned of the fire before now? The ship was in dry-dock, services on board were limited and many of the crew would have been of limited experience,......But why had nobody come to clear the mess which as it turned out was just two decks, directly below the source of the fire, in a Senior Rates Mess-deck.

Someone, I don't recall who, then went to look but got no further than the door. When he opened it what he discovered was a four-sided waterfall of dirty, warm water flowing down from three-deck above. The water being pumped under pressure into the fire zone was drawing off heat from the fire and mixing with the burnt waste-product of the fire to produce a curtain; effectively masking-off sight or awareness of the access to our mess-deck to any one on the companionway.

The damage had been done and the Fire Brigade service had the situation under control. We were able to evacuate the mess and make our way to a weather deck area and take in the aftermath of the event.

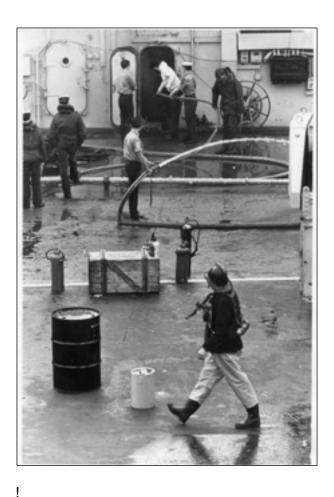


CPO Nicholls body being lowered from a starboard weather-deck to a waiting fire crew on the dock side.

HMS Victorious, Portsmouth 11 Nov 1967.

We learned later that the source of the fire in the Senior Rates Mess-deck was a water boiler which had boiled dry and in the absence of a thermal cut-out had continued to heat up, till glowing, subsequently causing the carpeted flooring to catch fire before taking hold. The mess-deck doors in 1967 did not have the square kick-out panels common today in doors and the metal door by expanding became a sealed access to the mess, preventing escape.

The fire spread to the island and we were informed that much of the communication and power cabling routed up in the island in being so badly destroyed contributed the decision to end the refit.





HMS Victorious with Portsmouth fire brigade in attendance 11 Nov 1967

Along with quite a few others I was living aboard the ship most week-ends. The exceptions being when I could afford the fares to travel by the distinctive, pale green Southdown Coach from Pompey to Coventry and then on to Nuneaton to visit my sister Jean, her husband, Ron and their family for the week-end returning to the ship by catching the return coach at midnight on Sunday evenings. In those days Southdown Coaches ran a fleet of coaches which all departed on Friday afternoon to multifarious destinations enabling 'matelots' from the many ships which were present in Portsmouth to get home. Today the ships and crews to be found in Pompey are far fewer, and the coaches have long gone.

The fire was not the only thing to beset the Victorious during that re-fit: the ships rudder had been removed for inspection and refurbishment of the bearings and to facilitate the reassembly, the pintles (the pegs on which the rudder hung) were packed with ice to create shrinkage to ease the sliding-on of the rudder. Once fitted and the effect of the ice had gone the expansion of the mating surfaces returned to normal it was discovered that the tolerances were incorrect and the rudder now set at a position of 10 to 20 degrees and was seized, permanently in that position.

We remained on the ship using it as accommodation but a decision to terminate the refit was being made at some high level. The smell of burned metal and charred material remained with the ship acting as a constant reminder that what Kamikaze attacks on the Mighty "V" during WW 2 had failed to do had been achieved; in dry dock, in peace time, unwittingly, by her own people.

The decision was made to transfer the designated Victorious crew to become the replacement to the ship's company of HMS Hermes near to completion of her 3rd commission.

I was officially transferred to HMS Hermes (The Happy 'H') on 27 Feb 1968

Options for the old crew of the Vic who had originally wished to serve a further term on her must have been reconsidered because the mix of crew changed and in due course many of the old crew who had entertained and enthralled us youngsters with tales of life in the Far-Flung, disappeared, returning to Naval Air Stations based around the UK. We had listened to and soaked up: tales of Bhugis Street, in Singapore, of life in Sembawang village, and Nee-Soon virgins, of Subic Bay and Olongapo, in the Philippines; where customers were invited to hang up their guns before entering a bar, recollections of Jenny's Side-Party in Hong Kong. The old hands left the ship but the anticipation of our forthcoming adventure remained. Still to experience was Singapore taxis; (often Mercedes) whose drivers for an agreed tip would race each other from Sembawang village to the city. Tales remained of very cheap taxis which picked up and dropped-off passengers along the way and of Kai-Tai; the 'she-men' who governed life on Bhugis St. Then Chinese women of the night available for \$10 (2/9:\$1), which equated to less than £1.50. Egg-banjos. Hand-made, soft leather boots with discreet zipper pockets to hide money in. Suits; which could be made-to-measure within 48 hrs. Tiger beer which was served so cold it could scour your throat as it went down. Hi-Fi record players, Binoculars, Rolex or Omega wristwatches and big name cameras all of which could be bought for a fraction of the retail price back in England. Not least was the trinket box to purchase; which had a lid that looked like wood-inlaid marquetry but was in fact an intricate puzzle of sliding pieces requiring up to a dozen sequenced moves in order to open the box.

I was still only 17 years old and the 4th commission of HMS Hermes was awaiting me.

An evening run ashore in Pompey for me with 'oppos' was a walk through the dockyard to either the Main gate by the waterside front 'The Hard' where about twenty paces could enable us to enter the nearest pub, then called 'The Apple Tree '. The pub was better known to us as the 'Apple Straza'; built on the corner it was the nearest building to the gate.

A short walk from the gate was The Home Club another establishment better known to us as 'Aggie Weston's' where we could buy a simple meal such as, pie peas and chips at very reasonable prices and get a beer as well. 'Aggie's' provided accommodation to naval personnel and their families.

Opened in 1881and originally called the Sailors Rest accommodating up to 700 sailors. In 1895, Queen Victoria endowed a cabin to be used as a Sailor's Rest in Devonport and allowed the use of Royal Sailor's Rest to be given to the whole institution.

Agnes was created a Dame of the British Empire in 1918. However, she died shortly after receiving this award on 23 October 1918 at Devonport. She was buried with full naval honours. In 1940, a frigate was named after Weston-Super-Mare and this became known in the fleet as "Aggie-on-Horseback".

Her 'Sailor's Rests' continued to operate up until the turn of the twenty-first century, when a fall in custom has led them to be closed.

Venturing further up to the town centre was The Trafalgar Club another facility like 'Aggies' where we could get the same simple food but the pleasure was in just having a meal, off the ship.

Into the town and Commercial Road provided more pubs than even an ambitious pub crawl could consider. Names of pubs included The Lennox, The Suffolk and The Albany of which the latter provided a perverse entertainment for the Armourers. The bar was sparse and had large mirrors running along the right hand side wall. This pub was sometimes frequented by a couple of "Queens" One went by the name of 'Gelder' a tall dark lank-haired unfortunate looking bloke who wore a black cape held together with a plastic flower and he wore flip-flops. He had a counterpart who went by the name of Wally; a short fat round-faced, old man who wore lilac make-up on his face. He was all the more memorable as his stubble was clearly growing and showing through the coloured face pack. The two characters were figures of ridicule (though it was rumoured that Gelder was the eccentric son of a wealthy family). So what was the perverse entertainment? In the bar was a juke box and for the paltry sum of sixpence (six old pence) we could play Shirley Bassey belting out 'Hey Big Spender' and as if on cue on this particular song these two would get up and pace around each other in a bizarre dance routine very conscious of their reflected appearance in the mirrors and at some point one would push the other causing offence, they would break-off and then, Gelder would go to the mirror and with a great flourish of his hand brushing the hair from his brow to the side of his head and tilting his face up and away he would pantomime a very camp sense of outrage.

Other simple attractions which were commensurate with our simple wages (about £4.00 pw) were a walk along to Southsea waterfront; to the permanent fun-fair park or to the public swimming baths in Victoria Park. A ride on the Gosport Ferry brought us an alternative walk about and some alternative pubs, one of which was known to matelots, ungraciously, as The Cunt and Drum (or just the C and D). Another large two storey corner pub greeted people coming off the ferry. In those days it was named 'Ark Royal'. A very peculiar character would sit on his own, at the end of the bar and without any prompting would just launch into a loud imitation, animal or bird call. I guess these days he would be asked to leave.

Also during my time living in the dockyard I started following the fortunes of Pompey football club. I went along to Fratton Park a few times to support the home team but every match I attended they lost and following a match when they played against Doncaster and lost yet again I decided to call it a day. My brother-in-law, Ron was a 'dyed in the wool' supporter of Manchester United and that team seemed to give better value for money. One week-end I went along with Ron and some of his mates to watch the famous team play at Coventry's home ground. That was when I got to see, Georgie Best in action along with Bobby Charlton, Dennis Law and others of that international squad.......I don't recall the score but I sure remember the result... 'Man U' lost and since that time I began to wonder if I was the common denominator.

An end to a run ashore was usually a stop at a burger stall on the Hard where we could buy a proverbial burger or hot dog and a bottle of milk to take back with us.

One night somewhat worse for wear a Bombhead, 'Pedler' Palmer chose to get onto one of the dock-yard cranes and climb to the very top. I don't know how or when he got back down. I do have memories of foolishly walking across the top of caissons (the large removable ends of the dry docks) when the footpaths had been removed leaving only the railway tracks to tightrope walk across clutching a bottle of milk in one

hand and a bun in the other. Why foolish?; because the large gaps created became vertical drops of 40ft – 60 ft down to the base or onto the heavy metal gearwheels contained within.

Another night on the town resulted in the Killick of our 'Grot' a, Chats Harris decided to go rowing in a boat in a closed-in water basin close to the historic, HMS Victory. The light of the moon was reflected off his spectacles for which he earned the name of Captain Moonlight though the name did not stick.

Eventually the transition came and we, as a crew were transferred to HMS Hermes which also had some refit work to complete before we could sail. My former boss a Chief Aircraft Artificer (O) Blondie Nicholls transferred with us but at some point during the commission he went on draft (replaced by CAA (O) Bob Fyles). Other ratings of the old 'Victorious' with names I forget left the ship but included, Leading Hand, Taff Cole, Chunky Bice, Joe Thompson, and Pedlar Palmer.

17 March 1968 The ships company was mustered in the After Hangar area to witness the Commissioning ceremony.

The AED workshops staffs were: CAA (O) Nicholls, CAA (O) Bob Fyles, COEL(A) Mick Culkin, AA2 (O) John Arnold, CPO Ted Batcheler (ejection-seat workshop) LAM (O) Dick Malfin, L/H Brummie Hay, and L/H Jan Loft (who was the Killick of the Mess 4N2).

The lads were a mixture of Naval Air Mechanics, NAM(O)'s and Ordnance Electrical Mechanics, OEM's and included, Dennis McAlhone; a Geordie who had joined up in the same recruitment intake as myself in July 1965, Trevor 'Ozzie' Osborne, Kev 'Stockers' Stockdale, Alan 'Dickie' Bird, 'Spud' Murphy, Pete Dempsey; another Geordie and Welshman, Fred 'Dolly' Gray.

4N2 our mess on the Hermes was occupied by over 80 guys and included all the ships permanent Fleet Air Arm, Junior Rate crew; Ordnance Workshops (Bombheads), Weapons Supply Party (also Bombheads), Radio (Pinkies), Electrical (Greenies) and Airframe and Engine (Grubbers).

The mess deck was divided in an irregular manner and I shared a space for 12 people, being about 13ft long about 7ft wide and about 8ft high. Each bunk was 6ft long and 2ft wide and when lying on your bunk there was less than 12 inches above your face to the underside of the next bunk. I don't recall any one saying they felt claustrophobic but we were pretty tightly packed in.

Under the lowest bunk (and I occupied one) were boot lockers for each person above. The lowest bunk provided a seat during the day and to accommodate this, our bedding had to be zipped-up in a PVC bag to become the seat cushion. The occupant of the second-up or middle bunk also had to zip up their bedding during the day because the middle bunk was swung down to provide the backrest to the seat. Only the top bunk remained as a bunk. The attraction of occupying a top bunk can be seen as there was no restriction as to when the occupant may wish rest or sleep. The lower two bunks required co-operation and consensus as to when you might 'turn in' (go to sleep).



Bunks on both sides at the far end set up as seating.

Mick Hancox, Spud Murphy and Paul Cox playing, Mah-Jong

Near right middle bunk set up for sleep position.

Our Grot was occupied by L/H Chats Harris, L/H Dick Malfin, Fred Gray, Ben Casey, Mick Rodgers, Mick Hancox, Jim Henderson, Dave Simkins, Paul Cox, George Lacey, Gusty Blowers and Me.

Keith (Chats) Harris, Weapons Supply

Dick Malfin, Ejection seat shop. He had an active interest in motor rally driving.

<u>Fred (Dolly) Gray, Workshops and a period on Last Minute Negatives.</u> He came from Llanelli, where his dad ran a haulage business.

<u>Ben Casey</u>, Ben was seriously troubled by the prospect of leaving the UK and his new wife behind. He failed to turn up when the ship sailed. Not sure where he worked.

<u>Martin (Mick) Rodgers</u>. Palouste Section. He came from Thornaby; about 20 miles from Loftus (my home) where his dad worked at the British Legion or the Social Club there. Mick was a keep-fit fellah and taught me to sword fight using: Foil, Epée, and Cutlass. Always fun to be around.

Mick (Hank) Hancox, Weapons Supply. He had a reputation for arguing and relished it. He and I became regular run ashore oppos. He had volunteered for the ships going to the Far East in the hope of visiting his mother, his sister Kathy and his brother who had immigrated to Adelaide, Australia some years before. Jim (Jock) Henderson. Weapons Supply

<u>Dave (Taff) Simkins</u>. Weapons Supply. Dave was in love with (or had a thing for Lulu) and was really 'p'd off' when we learned whilst out in Singapore that she had married Maurice Gibb (of the Bee Gees). He was so upset that he let me have his copy of Lulu's latest long playing LP.

<u>Paul Cox.</u> Weapons Supply. Paul came from Norfolk and had a recognisable East Anglian accent which often likened him to a song which had been in the charts "Have you Got a Light Boy"?

George Lacey. Radio workshops I think. George was a Scouser. Nuff said.

<u>Chris (Gusty) Blowers</u> Weapons Supply. He was from Leicester and had worked at the brewers Double Diamond (Inde-Coupe) and told a tale about disposing of a rat found at the brewery into the vat, which made me think twice about drinking that beer again.

The ship sailed and the adventure began. The text that follows is as taken from the journal with only changes to glaring spelling, grammatical or logical errors and no apology for any failings of political correctness. The text was produced in the present tense and remains so. This is the work of an 18 year-old;

then just old enough to vote and legally drink with no responsibilities for such things as: mortgage, wife, child, money loans or insurance premiums, and so no apology is made for the mind-set of this youth.

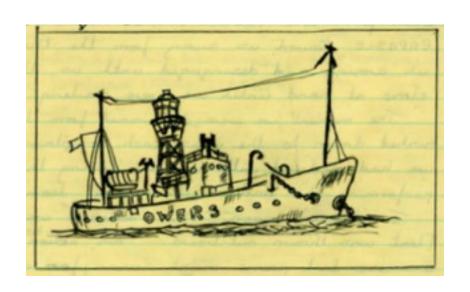






Tuesday 21-05-68 Page 1

After sailing from Portsmouth the ship anchored off St Helens Roads. In the afternoon the ship got underway and proceeded, via the Nab Tower, to the Portsmouth exercise areas. The afternoon trials took place to the south of the, *Owers* light vessel.

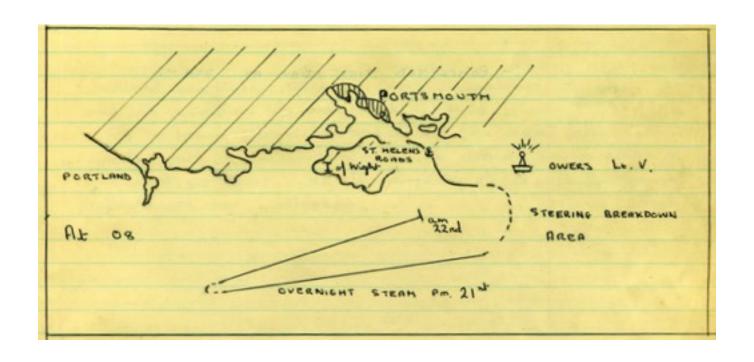




Owers: refers to Owers Bank a sand bank off to the east of the Isle of Wight. It was and still is a hazard to shipping. The first modern light vessel was placed off the Nore sandbank at the mouth of the River Thames in England, placed there by its inventor Robert Hamblin in 1732. Along with most of the lightships around the coast of Britain the Owers vessel was replaced by a Lanby buoy for cost savings (i.e. about 10% annual running costs). Lanby buoys were used from the 1970's onwards

Lanby buoy is a contraction of Large Automatic Navigation BuoY.

!





Passing HMS Bulwark when leaving port.

Tuesday 21-05-68

At 0830 the entire ship's company, with the exception of those engaged in the immediate running of the ship; and those who stayed out of sight, knowing they would not be missed, were made to 'Line the Deck' for our exit from the harbour. The two harbour tugs, *Boxer* and *Capable* towed us away from the Middle Slip Jetty, turned us around and disengaged with us, though they stayed close at hand until we were sailing under our own steam.

The moment we were dismissed from the flight-deck we all rushed down to the mess, each complaining about the cold we had endured, with the rain during the past hour, whilst performing the traditional harbour leaving routine.

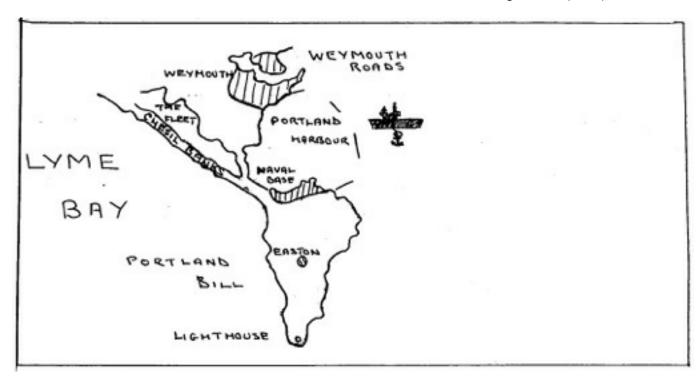
In the afternoon, "Man Overboard" was piped and a Smoke and Flame Float was thrown outboard. This action had been intended to be an exercise but panic must have arisen; for as the ship circled the area, smoke from the marker was drawn in by atmospheric air conditioning fans, the thick orange smoke was dispersed by the trunking and Punkah-Louvres into various messes. Subsequently HQ1 received a number of fire calls, believed to be serious. These hours gave the duty-watches and emergency parties plenty of practice.

COMPLETED FIRST DAY AT SEA

Line-the-Deck: Officially known as 'Procedure Alpha'

Page 2

Today the ship will start off in the Portsmouth areas and overnight proceed to the Portland areas. The planned full-power trials of main engines should make this a little faster. The ship once again will keep as clear of the shipping lanes as possible i.e. mid-channel and not close to land until tomorrow morning. The breakwater off Portland will be 'closed' to rendezvous with a Motor Fishing Vessel (MFV).



Portland peninsula contains large quantities of free stone and its quarries are extensively worked. It is being constantly eroded by the sea and the eastern side is losing an average of one foot per year! At times, parts of the cliffs being undermined have collapsed.

0900 "Emergency Stations" was sounded; everybody on board, armed with gas respirators and life jackets climbed the ladders and ran around the passages leading to the Flight-Deck, where they were mustered without much ado in their own, sections. I must have been considered either 'Hero' material or just a dispensable 'hand' for from now on in case of Emergency Stations being sounded I am to ensure the section is; cleared of people, is of no fire risk, mechanically or electrically, (that is to say I'm the last person from our section to reach the Flight-Deck). I must shut and lock the door leading into 3E3 passage then run down the passage, which is partly exposed to attack, nip into the section, switch-off all lighting and lock the remaining door. Then and only then am I allowed to 'venture' up onto the F/D and join my section.

On arriving on the 'roof' I found all my oppos 'togged-up'. We were briefed-down on what to do and what to expect in this situation. Also we were warned never to dive into the Oggin because of the odds on cracking open our heads on jetsam. The briefing officer made it clear that anybody who "jumped clear" before the order was given would probably be left behind.

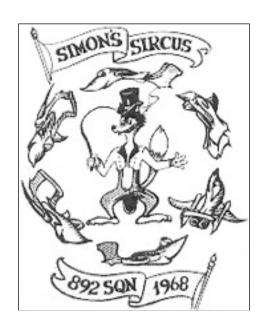


Thursday saw us still operating off the Isle of Wight. During the night we proceeded down channel. Tomorrow morning we should find ourselves off Portland Breakwater to pick up and land passengers. The rest of the day will be spent in the Portland Exercise Areas.

This morning 6 Sea Vixens of 892 Sqdn. came over accompanied by a photographic Hunter, all from Yeovil. Photographs were taken of the Vixens performing a few rolls, a loop and some low passes each with the Hermes in the background. The photos will be used for publicity at the Farnborough Air Show '68'.



892 Sqdn. Fly-Over



This morning we passed the, *HMS Leviathan;* the uncompleted, un-used, Aircraft Carrier on its way to the breakers yard.

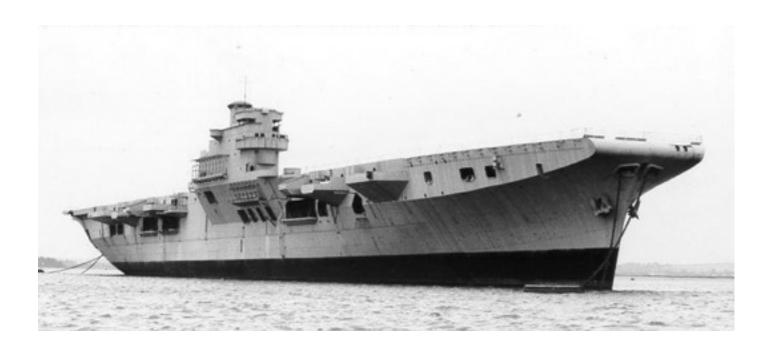
The following signals were exchanged:

HERMES "Have a good trip"

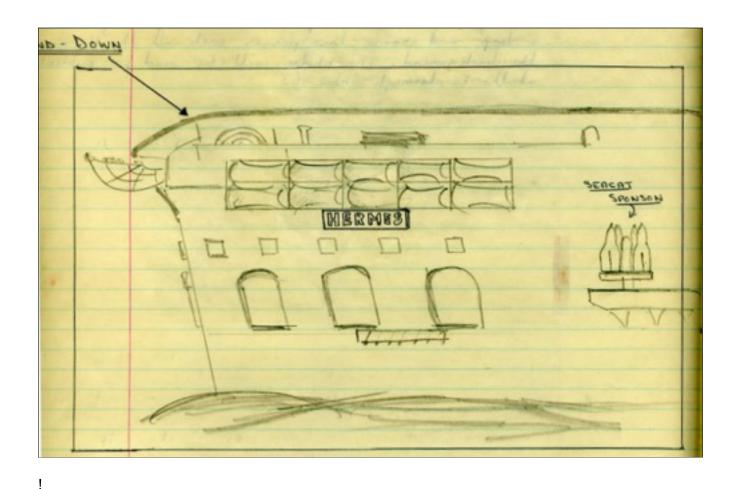
LEVIATHAN "Thank you"

After a long pause,

LEVIATHAN "Your turn next"



A very quiet day for us with regards to any activity. The weather was the best since we sailed. The sea was like glass. At dinner time I went with Martin (Mick) Rodgers and George (Scouse) Lacey up on the 'round-down' to sun bathe.



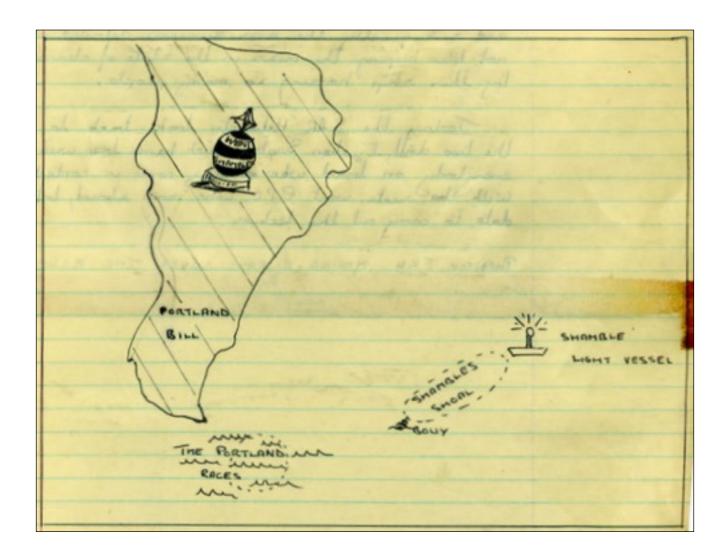
Side elevation to show the 'Round-Down of the Hermes; (first point of contact for returning aircraft). Some of the pilots of 893 Sea-Vixens derived some competitive bravado to see who could land furthest aft. This could be established by visiting the Round-Down to witness the rubber skid marks left by the tyres at touch-down. Concern began to show when someone declared that if the next pilot tried landing any lower, he would be arriving on the quarter-deck.

Up in RDP an RP2 told a tracker to follow-up a contact which after tracking for 1 hour was found to be the coast of France.

RDP Radar Plot. A compartment where all surface and air contacts could be picked-up and monitored using the ships Radar systems. RP2 is a Radar Plot Rating 2nd Class.

Portland Bill was only a mile to Stbd. Little could be seen of the impressive peninsula due to poor visibility. The ship on leaving the MFV passed between the 'Shambles'; a bank of broken shells and the 'Bill' itself.

Just about visible were the well known, 'Portland Races'. These are caused by very strong tidal streams meeting just off the 'Bill'. The violence of their meeting is increased by the sudden drop in depths and the inequality of the bottom. Add a gale to this turbulent water and the result is very unpleasant for any ship passing through.



The sea became choppy for the first time since we sailed. At 1240 a Phantom F4K accompanied by a Hunter T8, both from Yeovil, approached us to carry out aerial photography. The Phantom passed twice over both stern and brow of the ship; then did two low passes over the F/D, barely 25 ft from the 'island'.

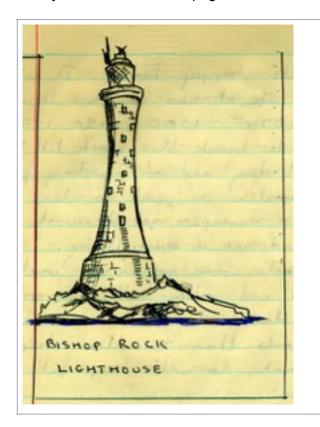
Commander Hardy, who is responsible for the messes, had the whole of the mess re-cleaned by us owing to the dirt which has accumulated since the Hermes berthed in dry-dock in Pompey. In the past weeks, mess-deck rounds carried out by the Officer Of the Watch (OOW) have been rather slack and subsequently the mess sweepers detailed-off daily have not been keeping the mess in the state of cleanliness required by this ship, housing so many people.

Today the Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopter took back to Lee-on-Solent the two drill Ejection Seats which have been used in lecturing everybody on board who may come in contact with them. With the seats went the Chief Petty Officer (CPO) who came aboard, before the sailing date, to carry out the lectures.



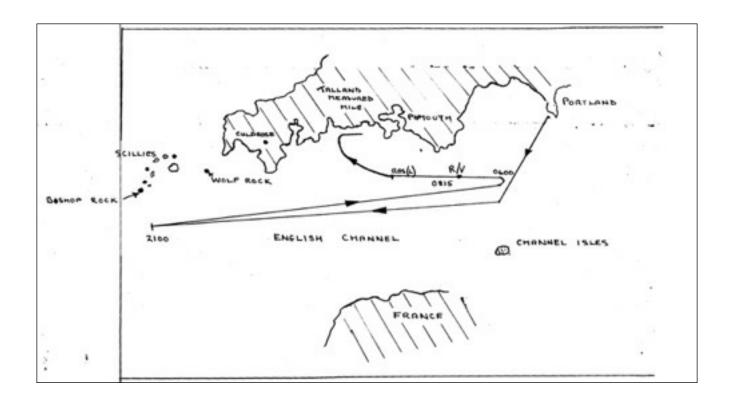
Phantom F4K from RNAS Yeovilton flying over the bows of Hermes

Commander Hardy was the senior Air Engineering Officer borne on Hermes and responsibilities for our messes were the very least of his duties, which included responsibility for all air weapons carried aboard.



Today we carried out a high speed trial on two boilers. At nearly 22 knots it was not long before the channel was left far astern. The ship reached a position south of 'Bishop Rock'. This light marks the Western Approaches to the Scillies.

From there the ship returned to an area south of 'Start Point' to rendezvous with the tanker *RFA Orangeleaf* on Sunday morning.



The sea remained quite choppy today. It is confirmed to me that while we are at sea we are to work a six and a half day week.

Weekday 0745 - 1000 Stand-Easy 1020 - 1150 Lunch 1310 - 1430 10 min break 1440 1600.

Saturday Normal working day.

Sunday 0800 - 0930.

The Sunday routine is just to clear the mess of bodies whilst the mess sweepers get to work. Up the section we clean and secure everything

This afternoon sports were organised including; deck-hockey, deck-football and volleyball; the only permissible ball games allowed aboard. Limited as we are, we are far better-off for sports than "smallieships" as crews on those have to make-do with keep-fit on the foc'sle (fore-castle).

We never sighted land today. We have stayed clear of the coast most of the time since sailing. Last night I went to the ship's company's film-show (Dollies) to see "Carry on Screaming". I left half way through; bored, to buy myself an Ice-cream Goffer; a 'spesh of the NAAFI's at half a pint.

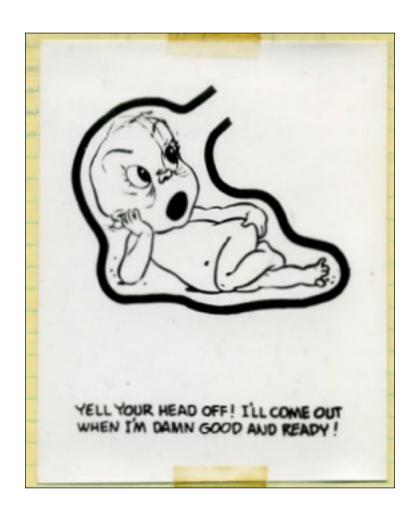
I had a walk on the F/Deck, last thing, for a breath of fresh air before going below to shower and 'turn-in'.

Dollies: The naval jargon to describe the movies; shown on-board. The projectionist was a volunteer from the ship's company. The films were supplied, usually as three separate celluloid reels in three aluminium flat cans. The film had to be fed by hand into the projector gear mechanism. The show would be interrupted as each reel came to an end and the lights came usually on to facilitate the exchange to the next reel, followed by a shout of "Lights". When a film was somewhat slow or boring and people talked of leaving early the optimists would try to encourage others by insisting, "It all happens in the last reel". The movies were distributed around the fleet and on an opportunity basis the batches of watched films would be swapped from ship to ship as the commission progressed.

Shore-bases had cinemas for entertainment and these were referred to as the Camp Dollies.

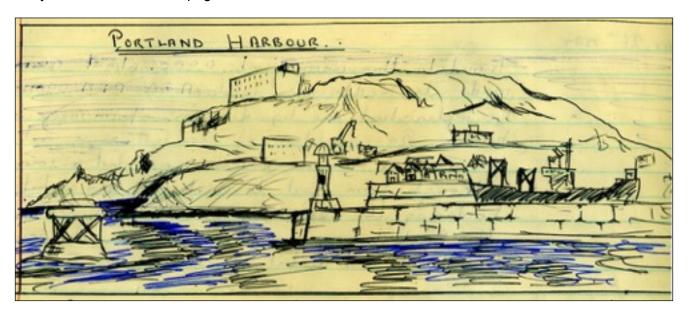
Goffer: A non-alcoholic sweet flavoured drink.

Turned-to this morning at 0800. About 0815 the ship made its rendezvous with *A80 RFA Orangeleaf* and we replenished our liquid stores from her, without any hitches. On completion of the RAS we set a course for the Talland 'measured-mile'. We did a couple of circuits although from West to East we had a bit of wind hindering the ship. Up on deck I took a look at the English coast and could see the towns of Polperro, Talland and a bit further to the East, Looe.





RFA A80 Orangeleaf (1955 - 1979) tanker



Today's happenings started early when we closed Portland Harbour to pick-up the Degausing Officer (DG Officer). The ship then moved on to the Degaussing Range. This range is situated about half a mile off the eastern side of the Portland Peninsula. Fine views can be obtained of *HMS Osprey* and also the Portland Borstal Institute

In the early afternoon the ship anchored and carried out a Sonar pinging trial on an underwater target in Weymouth Bay.

At 1345 five Wessex Mk 3 helicopters of 814 Sqdn. embarked. The 814 ground parties and their luggage arrived although owing to the heavy swell outside of the harbour the Motor Fishing Vessel (MFV) could not get close enough without causing damage to its hull.

We sail from Weymouth Bay when the Sonar trials are completed and again spend the night practising high speed steaming.

Degaussing: Any ship made of steel acts like a magnet and reacts with the earth's own magnetic field. The disturbances which occur can be used to initiate magnetic anti-ship weapons [mines and torpedoes]. Degaussing was a process used to cancel or minimise the disturbances created as the ship moved through the water.

This morning I was woken-up rolling around in my bunk like a football, from one side to the other. As I climbed out of my bunk my St. Christopher chain broke (an alleged sign of bad luck)

I went up on the boat-deck and found that we were only riding at anchor and that the heavy swell encountered just out of Portland was what had been rocking the ship while I was in bed.

- 1) Up the section I turned over a jar of yellow-chromate paint, onto the CAA's request forms.
- 2) Tonight after collecting my two cans of beer I offered a 'wet' to Mick who saw the whole can off. (I'll be getting one back tomorrow).
- 3) Hank brought a can down for me and not knowing it had been opened, turned it over and spilled half of it on the deck.
- 4) Getting up to fetch a 'minute-mop' I went and kicked over my glass of beer which was all that I had left.

I must watch that St Christopher chain.

[Two cans 330ml was the daily allowance of alcohol permitted to ratings that, at 18 years are old enough, legally to drink but too young to draw the daily rum ration for which they had to be 20 years. Afloat or ashore ratings were categorised as G for Grog, UA for Under-Age or, T for Temperance]

[Aboard ship the beer or and especially the rum or 'Tot' was unofficially currency for trade and favours between sailors who could swap for goods, personal chores, but most frequently in exchange for covering duties, particularly in harbour].



B1

This night the ship did another period of high speed trials on two boilers. Once again the channel proved too small to cater for such a speed and we ended up south of the 'Scillies'.

I am Duty Armourer today; this entails remaining at the workshop during flying stations. Tonight I will be 'knocking-off' at 1845.

Today saw our first aircraft exercise 'Crash on the Flight-Deck' involving 'Jumbo' our mobile crane which is so heavy that it affects the trim (list) of the ship.

[Jumbo is a self powered mobile crane capable of lifting crashed aircraft. It is kept on deck immediate aft of the 'island' superstructure and remains 'manned' during flying stations in readiness for any emergencies arising on the Flight-deck.]

The mess has been given a new 'Mess Killick' LOEM Loft and we are to be separated from the rest of the mess so that the Armourers are to occupy the starboard side of the mess.

[The mess is 4N2 i.e. located on 4 deck level counting down from the flight deck as level 1. 'N' corresponds to the sectioning of the ship athwart ship where the very forward-most section of the ship is 'A' section. The 2 relates to the position of compartments either side of the ships centre-line running from bow to stern; working outwards; even numbers to starboard and odd numbers to port].

[The trades occupying the mess include Airframe and Engines (AE), Electrical (L), Radio (R), Ordnance (O) and Ordnance Electrical Mechanics (OEM); in total 82 men are berthed in our mess].

This, the bosses hope will cause rivalry and competition between the two halves in mess cleaning. I don't agree with splitting the mess for no reasons but if it means a cleaner place to live then I'm all for it.

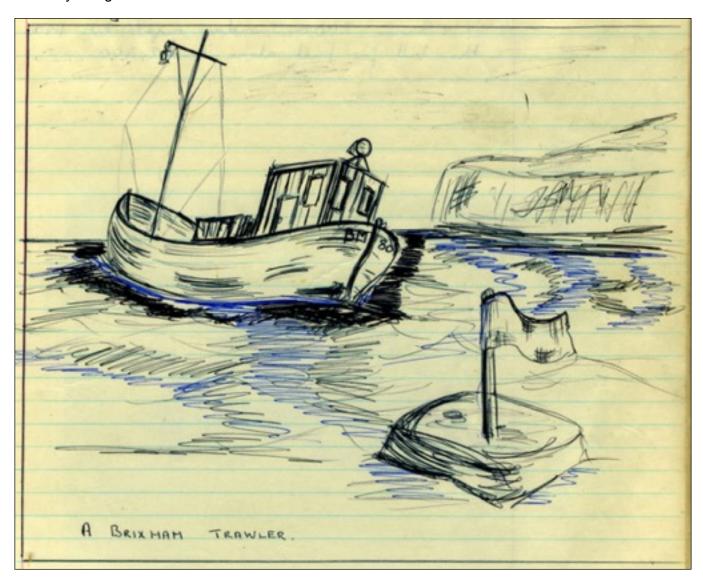


Portland was closed early this morning and for the remainder of the day we operated in Lyme Bay. If the visibility had been good a fair view could have been obtained of cliffs to the North; they are mostly chalk and sandstone and stand out well, particularly at Lyme Regis.

In Lyme Bay itself, there is little of interest. The water is shallow (20-40 fathoms) and if the ship was stood on end a good portion would be above sea-level.

This shallow water attracts fish......and fishermen.

Many trawlers from ports like Brixham operate here. Also found here are lobster and crab pots, usually marked by a flag.



Wednesday 29-05-68

page 16

Was woken at 0630 by Chats' alarm-clock; had to 'turn-to' at 0700 for Flying Stations.

At 1235 three Buccaneers from Lossie' appeared for deck landing practice (DLP's) which entails a rundown of engine rev's, landing on (keeping the deck-hook up) and as the wheels touch-down, rev up to a maximum and shoot-off the angled-deck. As the Bucc's disappeared 3 Hunters from Yeovil turned up to carry out some low passes over the Flight-Deck. None touched down; in any event of emergency, although it is possible for them to be arrested, their fuselage would not really stand up to being catapulted-off the ship afterward.

Since 2000 Tuesday night till 1800 Wednesday, the bill for fuel alone is £2,300.

Today the ship operated in Lyme Bay. There was little wind and plenty of flying to do. The ship started off, well to the south of Beer Head in Devon. Nothing could be seen for visibility was only 3 miles.

Thundering across the area, the Lyme Bay buoy was frequently getting in the way. There was also the odd fisherman out, one being from Dartmouth.

As early as 0200 visibility was down to 100yds.

At lunchtime visibility was back to 3 miles and the wind easterly so the ship steamed to Start Point in order that DLP's could again be carried out.

In the afternoon the wind changed to NNW so the way we wanted to go was inland and it has been a problem getting far enough down-wind to leave sufficient sea-room. This is particularly so as we have to steam at higher speeds in these light wind conditions



AEW Mk 3 Gannet (XP225) flying round on its last circuit. Note: Arrester-hook, Undercarriage and Flaps down

This night on completion of flying the ship turned east toward the Straits of Dover; in this restricted waterway the amount of shipping is high. To ease the traffic problem a two-way lane, shipping route has been introduced. West bound shipping keeps to the North and East bound to the South.

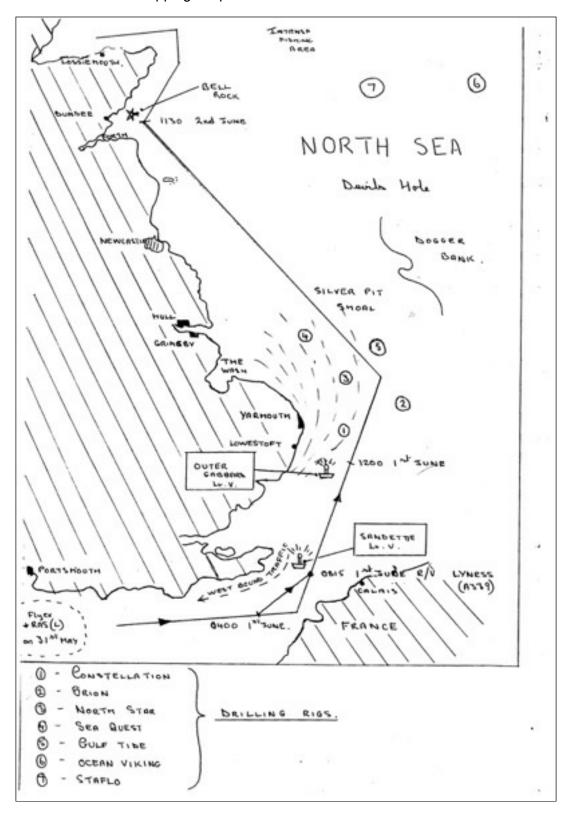


Table of oil-rigs on the chart.

We passed through the Straits between 0400 and 0800 keeping so far south that the morning Watch would be able to see the coast of France; provided the Channel fog was not apparent.

Turned to this morning and whilst in the hangar, stencilling some signs, met a mate of mine, Tony Kyle, the Whitby lad I met while I was up at Lossie.

Tony Kyle's parents ran a guest house in Whitby on the right hand side of road running down from the Whitby Museum toward the roundabout. He was part of 801 Buccaneer Squadron.

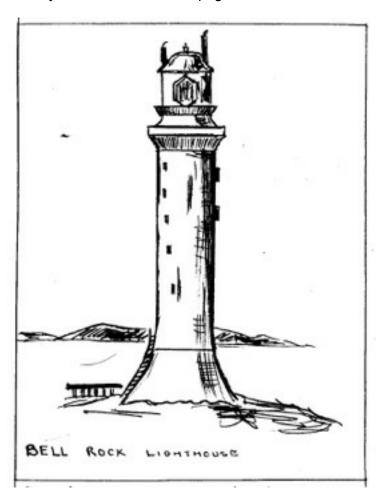
I have to go down for his 'Tot' sometime next week. A few blokes I know from Lossie are aboard with 801 Sqdn.

We are now complete but for a couple of aircraft.

Sqdn	Aircraft	Manufacturer	Primary Role	Function	Designation
801	Mk 2 Buccaneers	Blackburn,	Bomber,	Low level-Strike	S2
893	Mk 2 Sea-Vixens	de-Havilland,	Fighter,	All Weather Fighter	FAW3
814	Mk 3 Wessex	Westland,	helicopter,	Anti-submarine	HAS3
849	Mk 3 Gannets	Fairey,		Airborne Early War	ning AEW3
SAR	Mk 1 Wessex	Westland,	helicopter,	Search and Rescue	HAS1
COD	Mk 2 Gannet	Fairey,	Courier on Despatch	mail postal service	

At 0800 we rendezvoused with A339 RFA Lyness to RAS (stores). The first load was passed at 0845-after long shots had failed. While this RAS was going on we had to alter course for a ship was crossing our-'T' from the starboard bow about 200 yards away.

During the afternoon we passed through the Harwich Hook yachting race; at the time we were up on the flight-deck carrying out 'Emergency Stations'.



The ship was in the vicinity of Bell Rock (East of Dundee). From here a helo went to RAF Leuchars for a 'paper run' while the ship remained in the area.

The lighthouse is built on a mass of red sandstone; it is white in colour and stands 93 ft high. It is also one of the weather reporting stations whose observations are given on the BBC weather broadcasts.

From here the ship proceeded northwards to the Moray Firth. For a considerable distance off Buchan Ness there is intense fishing activity. At this time of year (June) the main herring fishing is found in this area. Drifters work mainly from Wick, Fraserburgh and Peterhead, to which they return, normally daily. Many foreign drifters are also to be found.

Most of the nets used range from one to two and a half miles in length, though foreigners may use 4 to 5 miles long. When trawlers are in the area nets often become entangled and the drifters come off worst. Sometimes the nets of several drifters are mixed up. Then each boat hauls in as fast as God will let them and the first boat to reach the tangled centre cuts the other net away.

We worked till about 1100 this morning because "the job was held up" by Heads of Departments (HOD's) using our workshop for a conference. We're supposed to secure at 0930, so we all came down to the mess complaining about the 'Ship's Companies' routine and what an easy time we would be having if we had come aboard with the Squadrons.

NB there's not a lot in it!



Today the ship arrived in the Moray Firth. For the next two weeks; the First Work-Up will be carried out in this area. Generally the ship will remain in diversion range of Lossiemouth the Naval Air Station.

The Moray Firth is fairly shallow; normally less than 40 fathoms. On the south shore there are several artificial harbours including Lossiemouth. Many fishermen use the firth though British trawlers are forbidden to fish. In the south-west corner near Inverness, the Caledonian Canal runs across Scotland to the Loch Linnke area.

A heavy flying programme with bombing and rocketing on ranges and 'splash target from 07.45 through till 2030. Up the 'section' we finished servicing all of the rocket pods and had a pretty easy day, as regards work.

Today we operated in the Lossiemouth area carrying out the second flying phase. Only one Gannet took off as, A-boiler lost steam, but of the second block only 1 out of 13 aircraft did not take to the air. During the day the wind changed and we had to 'thunder' West at high speed, making life very difficult for 'MFV Blakeney'; she is very slow and it is a fair way out to ship.

We had to get her out and point her in the right direction, then in the afternoon, all changed and for the rest of the day, she was somewhere astern puffing out clouds of black smoke in a vain pursuit of this erratic mobile airfield.

At 1325 Rear Admiral Holt, Director General of Aircraft, was brought aboard by the helo, from Lossie.

At 2000 we had a RAS (L) (liquids) with RFA OLMEDA



BUCCANEER ON THE PORT CATAPULT



Tanker RFA Olmeda A124 (1967 - 1994)

This day started off well but ended up hectic. Went to school at 1030 and had a new 'Schoolie' (a Royal Navy educational officer; usually a Lt) to take us for GCE Mechanics (applied Mathematics). There are only two of us in the present class and the other lad is hopeless at maths so the Schoolie is going to be spending his time teaching the maths side of the lesson instead of getting us ahead..

In the afternoon I and Pete Stockley [this I think was Pete Dempsey] went up on to the Flight-Deck dressed

Each trade has its own colour to clearly identify them on the busy Flight-Deck

Red and Black Aircraft Armourers (known as "Bombheads")

Brown Airframe and Engines (known as "Grubbers")

like Christmas trees with our red and black surcoats, our helmet, goggles and ear defenders.

Green Aircraft Electricians (hence the name "Greenies")

Green and Blue Aircraft Radio (known as "Pinkies")
Yellow Aircraft Handlers (known as "Chockheads")
Black and White Flight-Deck Marine Engineers (hence the name "Badgers).

Up on the flight-deck aircraft were being launched so we had to stay out of the way for some time before we were approached by the CAA(O) "Blondie Nicholls" and detailed off to help (or hinder) the line CAM(O) of 893 Sqdn who sent to work with a POAF(O) Hayden, helping him remove and change fired rocket pods, carry out No Volts tests on wing pylons and generally helping out all round; this took us till 1800 (we normally secure at 1600). On top of that at 1900 we had to turn-to at 5Q weapons Magazine to clean the tubes of fired rocket pods; we finished altogether that night at about 21.30.

The pods which are fitted on port and starboard wing pylons each hold 36 off 2" Rocket Projectiles; RP's) the rockets are unguided line of sight weapons which can be fired in a ripple or all altogether like a broadside. The pods are removed by use of a sling and special purpose, Type-C hoist. The No-Volts test is carried out on the aircraft firing circuits to ensure no stray volts are present immediately prior to connecting to the weapons circuitry.

Still in the Moray Firth!

Another tiring day; the squadrons had an even bigger flying programme and I am duty keys rating. The 'Schoolie didn't turn up this morning - 'that's two lessons wasted this week. I did a bit of work on my 'RABBIT' (A Rabbit in this 'mob' is a nick-knack or gadget made from pusser's materials. My rabbit is a writing board half covered in Perspex so's I can put in photos of home and relations and of course 'totties'. All those who work in the carrier shop were 'called out' again, straight after supper to clean rocket-pods in Q section magazines; this was by the order of Lt Penfold, our DO.

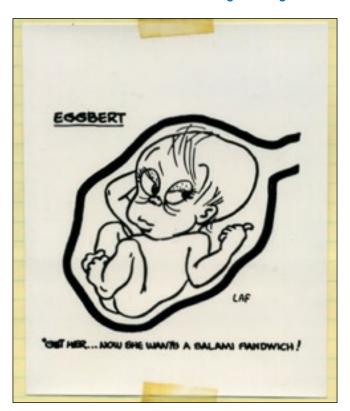
Of course everyone had complaints and so the moaning began - including the Senior Rates. Any Senior Rate who cannot keep his temper should not be in charge of other people - after all, if he loses control of himself how can he be expected to take control over a body of people below him. Mick Culkin the COEL dropped a weight on his foot tonight when the panic started.

My 'rabbit' was a sheet of plywood about 2 ft X 1 ft which was varnished and half covered with Perspex. It had a battery pack mounted on the underside to power a lamp fitted on the upper side at the end of a length of shaped aluminium tubing. I was able to use this to write letters while lying in the narrow space of my bunk even if the lights in the mess had been switched off.

'mob' Jack-speak for the Royal Navy

'Pusser' Jack-speak for Purser a role in the navy dating back to sailing days to a man responsible for all the items of stores: ordered, held and accounted for on the ship. Anything on the ship; if not an individual's personal property would be considered 'pussers' including and especially the rum.

Lt Penfold was our Divisional Officer and the Air Ordnance Engineering Officer on the Hermes.



At about 0830 we exchanged identities with *HMS JUNO;* one of the four escorts in company with Flag Officer Flotillas (FOF), Western Fleet in Hampshire. Then *HMS AISNE* was contacted and she has been in our area all day, either acting as plane-guard destroyer, or away by herself, some 40 miles to the East. Here she was exercising with our submarine, *OTUS* and a *Shackleton*. We have seen her close-up on two occasions for light jackstay transfer so that we could transfer PO Jim Hennesey to give them a lecture on Safety Equipment. This was in case the worst did happen and they had to recover a ditched aircrew. 814 Sqdn have also been acting as standby plane-guard while *Aisne* has been with us and actual plane-guard during the afternoon.

The Buccaneers have been carrying out bombing and rocketing at Tain Range and carrying out low-level strike at the end of the sortie. The Vixens have been progressing to high and low altitude intercepts and have been using rockets on Tain Range, while the Gannets have been doing CAP control and AEW



HMS Juno F52 (Leander Class frigate)



HMS Aisne D22 (Battle Class destroyer) 1947 -1970

Shackleton: The Avro Shackleton was a British long-range maritime patrol aircraft for use by the Royal Air Force. It was developed by Avro from the Avro Lincoln bomber with a new fuselage. It was originally used primarily in the anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) roles, and was later adapted for airborne early warning (AEW), search and rescue (SAR) and other roles from 1951 until 1990. In 1968 the Shackletons operated from RAF Kinloss



Avro Shackleton AEW2 1951 - 1991

AEW is Airborne Early Warning provided by the radar carried on the underside of the Gannet. A single Gannet can fly out onto station 200 miles from the ship and scan a further 200 miles ahead of itself to pick-up, on radar, any enemy aircraft activity, thereby giving the parent ship 400 miles of early warning (time enough to scramble a Vixen or two to intercept the aircraft before it is within striking distance of the ship). This 'given-up-facility' was to cost the Navy dearly in 1982 during the Falkland's conflict when we lost the HMS's Sheffield, Ardent and Antelope and also the Merchant ship, Atlantic Conveyor.

Thursday 06-06-68 page 25

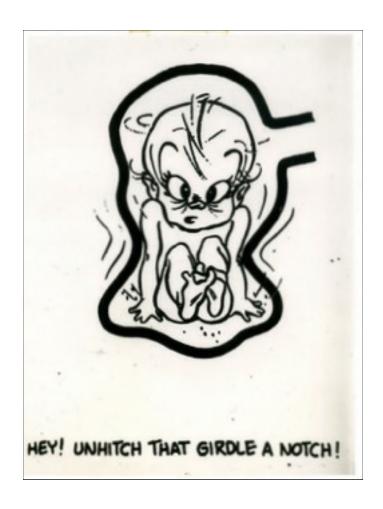
An unincidental day in the Firth.

Friday 07-06-68 page 25

Continued battle with the submarine *Otus* with the help of *Aisne* (destroyer) and *814 Sqdn*.

Every now and then a Shackleton is seen near the ship. The aircraft is sometimes operating in an RAF exercise, in an area North of Lossiemouth.

In the middle of the area are two buoys used by the Shackletons as radar targets. The other day the ship passed between the buoys; supposedly red and yellow in colour, they are very rusty and difficult to spot. *Hermes* normally remains to the East of these buoys.



We anchored at 1830 just off Lossiemouth. Since 16.30 I had been in my civvies waiting to get ashore. Up on the gangway at 1900 we were told to move into the hangar where we could be sorted out in an orderly fashion. Well once inside, through those hatches, we were left to ourselves and it became utter chaos. Imagine 900 matelots screaming to get ashore, each trying to be among the first two hundred who could be taken ashore aboard the *MFV Blakeney* to the Lossie harbour (organisation fell over there-and no mistake). I got ashore on the third boat-load. The harbour was very busy with people. I went along to the Steamboat Hotel where I had pre-arranged to meet Mick, who I later learned, had gone to the 'camp'. Inside I met Wilf (an Airman off 814 Sqdn) and tagged along with him for a couple of pubs till we reached 2200 when the pubs close, then I went for a walk around and met Alan "Dickie" Bird and together we went looking for some Lossie Flossie's; I hooked one – 'M' and arranged to meet her on Sunday (provided I could get a sub). I got her address and told her I would get in touch by post.

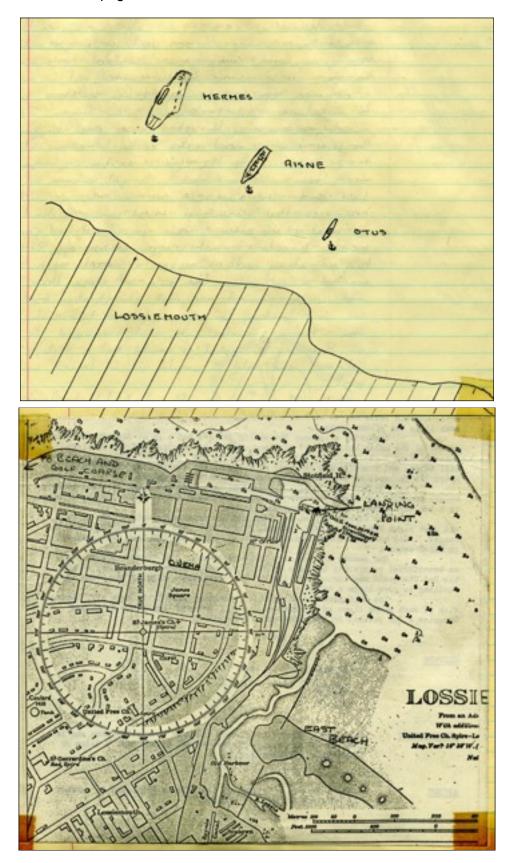
We then left as the last liberty boat was due to leave in the next five minutes. Down at the harbour we saw a Marine fall in the 'Oggin'. He was followed by a fully dressed diver, a rope was thrown in and somehow it was the diver who was pulled out first.

A couple of 'Fisheads' swam across the harbour and back for bets amounting to 4 tots each. Dickie and I came back on board posing as CPO's on an officer's liberty boat and were saluted by the Duty Officer on the quarter-deck.

Steamboat Hotel: Pubs in Scotland then could not open for trade on a Sunday, by law, but many establishments overcame that restriction to 'opening hours' by being registered as a hotel.

'M' was met in the local chip shop where she and her friend were being harassed by quite a few matelots, all the worse for drinking. They were followed out by the group and as they ran so did the matelots, Dickie and I followed The girls took a turn into a blind road then found themselves blocked in and were obviously alarmed by the event and fear of escalation from the vocal exchanges taking place. I stepped forward to the girls and turned to face the group offering a challenge to face anyone who wanted to chance his luck with me before restarting on the girls. It worked, amazingly and damned lucky, for me as nobody put me to the test. It must have all seemed very gallant of me. The group dissipated and I struck up conversation with M. 41 years later reflecting on the memories I think that in the same circumstances today and with the propensity for violence fuelled by alcohol, I cannot help but wonder if I and the girls might come to serious harm.

Oggin: Jack-speak for the sea.



Map of Branderburgh and Lossie

Could not get ashore as I was Duty-watch and could not get a 'sub'. Was feeling pretty depressed and I wrote to M; with a bit of luck I'll be granted shore-leave sometime next week-end to see her.

We secured at 1100 today - overtime again - pity we don't get overtime pay.

At dinner time I cracked open my bottle of Whisky and mixed in a drop with Dick Malfin's 'Tot' and took a wet of it. - Just like cold fire! The bottle was put away for a rainy day.

At about 23.15 those ashore were just returning, horribly drunk for the most of them and performing like animals; enjoying it (every minute). Just wait till tomorrow morning! Drinking to such an extent works you up but gets rid of a load of tension that builds up after, hard graft at sea.

For myself catching the 'tottie' on Sat night helped a lot though I didn't have time to stay with her for long. I got to sleep, eventually at 01.00 0n Monday morning.

PS. Tonight I was called out to re-arrange the dining-hall after the film show and having just stepped out of the showers, went up wearily in my flip-flops and happen as it would I snapped the front support of one, trying to walk backwards.

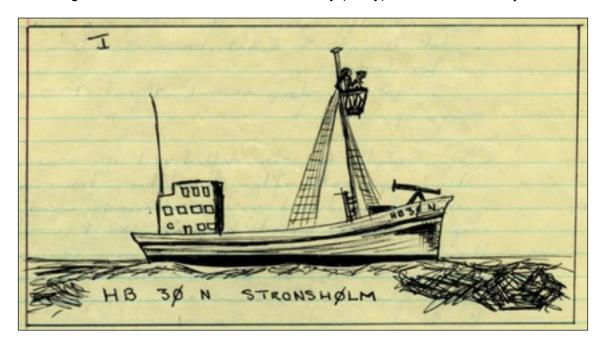
After 'getting-on' to the lads about borrowing them, I've got to borrow some myself now; I'll think of something I'm sure.

From anchoring off Lossiemouth the ship has returned to the eastern edge of the Moray Firth. Generally we are some 30 - 40 miles from the air station.

It is on the outer limit of our operating area where most of the shipping is seen, usually on passage from Pentland Firth to the East coast of Britain. Further inside the firth only fishermen are to be seen, though on Friday last a rather unusual boat was close-up to the ship.

It appeared (from a glance) to be a whaler though very small; Smaller even than the *Blakeney*.

The crows-nest on the mast looked very precarious, especially with two look-outs crammed into it. An object looking like a harpoon gun was positioned forward in the bows. Nationality was uncertain and perhaps their navigation was too, for there cannot be many (if any) whales in the Moray Firth.



This is a perfect example of the Russian spy-ships. This particular one stuck with us continually during our stay in the Moray Firth. It is easy for us to send radio signals which won't be picked up by those, 'bug-ships' but that's no reason to allow them to parasite themselves. Look what happened to the Yanks, *San Pueblo* and yet we let these go, scot-free to prevent any political upheaval as regards any Anglo-Soviet relations.

The USS Pueblo incident.

!

On Jan. 28, 1968, the USS Pueblo, Captain Bucher's intelligence-gathering ship, was approached by six North Korean vessels, including four torpedo boats. Like the U.S. Navy EP-3E forced earlier this year to land on Chinese territory, Bucher's ship was 24 miles off the east coast of North Korea, in international territory, at the time of the North Korean approach. Like the EP-3E, the Pueblo carried sensitive electronic equipment and was lightly armed.

He and his crew were subjected to 11 months of imprisonment and torture before the U.S. government issued a pro forma "apology" that allowed them to come home.

33 years later in 2001 the USS Pueblo was still in on public display in the harbour at Pyongyang, North Korea.

Went up on deck with Trevor (Ozzie) Osborne to work along with Sqdn Bombheads of 893 removing and fitting RP's - a real drag working with that watch and so we were glad to be 'stood-down' (sent down the mess on 'call-out'), at 1200 till 1700. I got my head down till 16.00, and then prepared my bi-weekly dhobying to be sent down to the Chogie (Chinese) laundry.

Up on deck a camouflaged RN helo from *RFA Resquire* [actually Resouce] landed to take off a sick-bay patient; a PO with his right ankle wrapped up, the size of a football and his foot bared.

At 1800 we went down Q-Section to clean-out RP's; there was only one to do. Hank showed us around the magazines from 5Q deck to 7Q deck. 8Q contains 1000lb bombs and stayed locked. After receiving a phone-call, Hank said we could 'knock-off'. Huh! At 2030 we were called out to clean a further half dozen pods.

Using our 'broad'!!! imaginations we made up our own lines to corrupt verses of recent 'chart-hits and sang them whilst cleaning the pods. We both 'curled-up' laughing at the lyrics which came into the songs. That turned out to be another late night.

I don't think, now though, that 2330 - 0001 is late, it's just that I don't seem to get early nights.

A quiet day for flying. The two diversion airfields were having yo-yo like cloud bases; subsequently flying programmes were being cancelled regularly all day, although the majority of Boscombe Down sorties were flown.

Drew out my anti-flash gear today, for use in 'action-stations'. I got it at the last minute as daily orders stated that the ship would go into, State 1, Condition Zulu, which means ACTION-STATIONS, at 1030. Anyone wanting to move from one part of the sip to another had to be 'togged-up' in, anti-flash, (helmet and gloves), Anti-Gas Respirator (AGR) and wearing a life-jacket. Apart from this I had to 'don on' a foul weather anorak and overalls, flight-deck helmet, ear-defenders, eye-shields and coloured surcoat, because we have to work on the flight-deck.

We fitted two inert 1000lb bombs, internally to the Boscombe Down A/c as we had been called up from workshops as a backing-up party.

We got 10 mins for dinner and the entire ship's crew was fed in record time.

In the afternoon we fitted 12 x 1000lb bombs; 4 internal and 2 external x 2 A/c and as time drew on the A/c became 'chock-a-block' with Senior Rates enjoying the novelty of fitting the first of the large bombs of the Commission and so all the hands got their noses pushed out. (But were we to complain?).

I had been asked by the Boscombe lads to go up and help them today but I was 'Heads cleaner'. At the best of times 5P2 heads are usually dirty and I decided to try and 'huck-out' the place. I found a shortage of cleaning gear so drew some more out of the mess. By 1200, after being interrupted by dozens of blokes pleading that they were desperate, I eventually finished the deck and found that it is really red and white, - not mauve and grey.

Was 'called-out' this evening to clean *Ejector Release Units* (ERU's). We did not finish till 0015 and we felt shattered (19hrs on the trot) and yet we managed a chorus of, "Happy Birthday" for COEL (A) Mick Culkin, - he wouldn't say his age though.

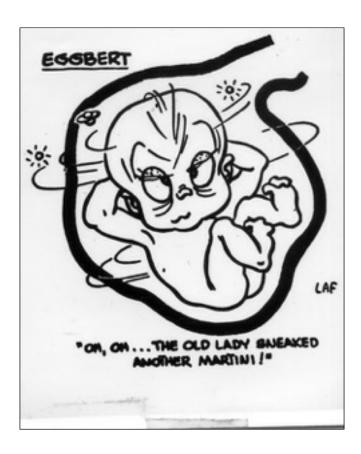
After taking supper (Night Flyers) and dhobying my underwear I 'turned-in' about 0200.



Heavy mist (Scotch) set in and we anchored off Lossiemouth; the water became so calm that a coin dropped in would have caused noticeable ripples.

Got an answer from M, says she will meet me at, Pete's Café in Lossie at 1900 on Sat'. Had plenty of work on today as I was 'duty-keys'. I had to stay behind because John Arnold said he was prepared to stay behind and mend some electrical equipt'. (IDIOT!); as if we hadn't had enough to do during the day; 2030 we secured.

Told the CAA "those who put the hours in get the time off" - hinting at a 'make and mend' tomorrow. The 'Buzz makers' and 'Spreaders' started off their 'GEN' stories of where the ship was going -places ranging from Oslo to Cornwall in evasion of this sea-fog which is controlling our flying programme.



John Arnold: a Petty Officer Aircraft Artificer 2nd Class (Ordnance). I sounded quite disapproving of John's volunteering. John was an old, career PO, white haired with a pleasant, quietly spoken manner. He was always helpful and it is not surprising that he had offered to help out on his own.

Buzz makers: People who assure others that they have heard from someone, who knows someone else, who spoke to somebody else, who is a reliable source of, 'GENUINE information' on the ship. The info' is said to be a GEN-BUZZ.

We stayed at our anchorage until 1700 from which we sailed in circles whilst carrying out a VERTREP (Replenishment at sea by Helo). *Vertical Replenishment delivered in a cargo net or on a wire strop.* Was given my 'Make and Mend'; tried to get my head down but the 'Uckers' champions were at it, in the mess so there was never any peace and guiet.

I was about 2hrs late with getting my laundry prepared and the chogies wouldn't take it.

I heard from an official source - "the ship will remain at sea for the complete" - which means I can't get ashore to see 'M'.Bastard! 10 months is a hellava long time to write to each other without knowing ourselves intimately. We were to have gone to a dance being put on for the *Hermes* by *HMS Fulmar* up at the club.

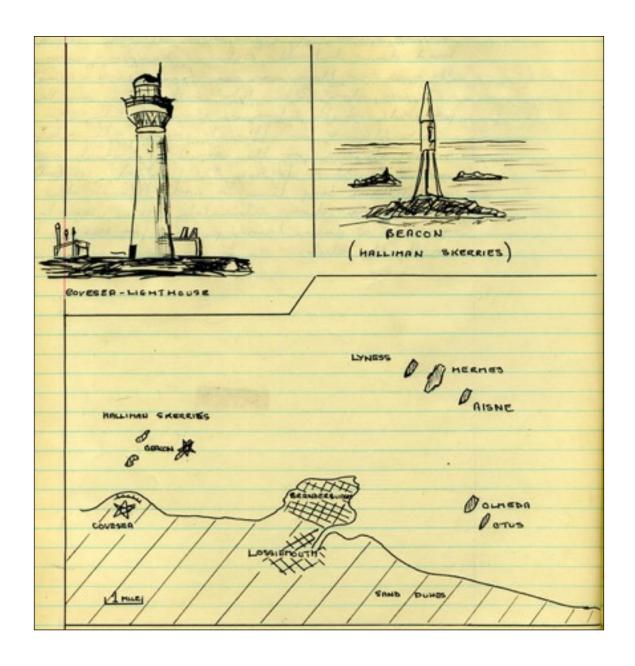


VERTREP: Vertical Replenishment; the transfer of stores from one ship to another. Restricted by the payload of the helicopter but without the disadvantage of having to keep two ships on parallel precision sailing courses.

The Fulmar Club was the social room and bar for the Junior Rates at RNAS Lossiemouth.

Uckers: A Naval version of Ludo played by four people and usually accompanied by a dozen or more uninvited advisers. Official rules exist with many to comply with. It is usually noisy; often riotous and can end abruptly when one player may 'Up-end' the board, spilling the pieces. The board is usually about 2 ft. square and painted by hand. The pieces were invariably produced by cutting-up a broom handle and painting the same. Terms include: Blobbing-up, Mixey-Blobs, Six-at. This was a serious game of skill and tactics and anyone throwing sixes consecutively was called a 'Six-throwing-Bastard'

Have not done much fixed-wing flying today, again due to foul weather and the helos could not bring-off any mail or papers.



Our lan's birthday, have sent him a post-card of the Hermes in the Moray Firth. I was up on the 'forward sponson' electrically testing ERU cartridges but was soaked within minutes because we were sailing through heavy sea-mist; we packed up and the rest of the morning was spent taking it easy down the workshop.

Sponsons: Sponsons are projections from the sides of a watercraft, for protection, stability, or the mounting of equipment such as armaments or lifeboats, etc.

Sunday 16-06-68

page 37

Since sailing from Lossiemouth the ship has been dashing around at high speed trying to be in two places at once. The better weather usually in the West and the submarine/helicopter exercise area, in the East pulls the ship two ways. The result is as always a compromise and we remain between the two, about 25 - 30 miles NE of Lossie.

The Editor asked, yesterday for accounts of how the ship managed to anchor in fog so close to land. Apparently some people were surprised, when the fog lifted to see Lossiemouth and the coast. Radar is the answer for the land can be seen clearly on it and more importantly the other ships can be seen clearly. When Hermes anchored, there were some twenty fishing boats steaming out of harbour; passing unseen within 'cables'.

Radar also enabled the other ships of the force to anchor close to Hermes without seeing her and also permitted the close control of our boats running between the ships.

In addition to radar there is a radio aid called, 'Decca' which can be used to plot the ship's position quickly and accurately on a chart. A combination of the two enabled the ships to anchor safely in the position shown on Sat 15th. A further check is given by the echo-sounder, giving the depth of the water in fathoms. In due time the units will be changed from fathoms to metres.

The Editor: He was the editor of the ships daily paper, the Hermes Herald.

Sunday 16-06-68

page 38

Was stood-down this afternoon and in our 'caboose' a topic was started - 'Spiritualism - and by the end of the afternoon how the end of the world may come about by Gas and Biological weapons.

I'm going to try giving up eating 'nutty' from today and eat more at meal times.

Caboose: Jack-speak, a living/sleeping area within the main mess deck. It is not closed off by a door but is effectively an enclosure; in our case for 12 occupants.

Nutty Jack-speak; a generic term for confectionery.

[&]quot;Any bearing today has to Sunday is purely coincidental and should be blamed on the calendar" QUOTE. Today was changed into a normal working day.

[&]quot;Six days shalt thou work and on the seventh thou will 'dig-out' twice as hard."

Very foggy day at sea. No fixed-wing flying though aircrews were briefed 5 times, uneventfully. Nevertheless the helo's took flight for a Casex Op. with *Otus* and a *RAF* Shackleton which failed to turn up as it had to follow-up and investigate a possible distress, 150 miles NE of the exercise area. Admiral Fell (FOAC) presented eight Long Service and Good Conduct (LSGC) medals today.



Long Service and Good Conduct medals are awarded after 15 service beyond the age of 18 years.

Monday 17-06-68

page 40

A party of 'Jennies' were brought aboard and they spent some time in the hangar, so I and Dickie excused ourselves from the workshops. (I was going to teach him the Daily Check on the G-Droppers [Rescue equipment]) which by coincidence was kept in the hangar.

They were from Lossie and I only saw a couple of 'lookers'; I think 90% of the Jennies are good lookers and the other 10% end up at Lossie!

Heard this morning - officially that the flying programme 'work-up' was complete, so in future the air-driven world would be given one hours notice for 'Flying Stations'.

Jennies: as in Jenny Wren WRN (Women's Royal Navy).

My observations were not original and commonly used shore-side; "cheap and callow youth".

G-Dropper: A large inflatable life-raft carried in a steel cradle and fitted to a pylon on the underwing of a Gannet for carriage.



The sketch shows the intended route back down the East coast. A portion of the passage is dotted as it was possible that the ship may 'close' RAF Leuchars to recover one Wessex 3.

At 1000 280 natives were waiting on the 'foc'sle' to be taken ashore by *MFV Blakeney*. We flew-off Admiral Fell FOAC by helo at 0850.

In fog and well off land there was nothing to see. 'Jock' Henderson went ashore on leave to get married to Heather; a lass from Inverness; he'll have 5 days of marriage before he leaves her for the 'Commish'.

RAF Leuchars: In 1968 RAF Leuchars was the operating base for the Lockheed Lightning interceptor aircraft used by the RAF as a fast response (scramble) to meet the long range Russian bombers which constantly tested Britain's air defence; both to detect and intercept them during the Cold-War.

Today 2009 it is the home of RAF 43 Sqdn operating Tornado's. The Station is primarily responsible for maintaining Quick Reaction Alert (North), providing crews and aircraft at 10 minutes readiness 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to police UK airspace and to intercept unidentified aircraft.

The Lightning was always a popular visitor to Lossie and Air Shows because of its ability to race down the runway, engine howling and with afterburners glowing in the jet-pipe, stand on its tail and climb near vertically into the blue at up to 20,000 ft/min.

foc'sle: The deck area usually above the Main-deck at the forward end of the ship. In medieval times some warships were built with a castle; a raised structure at the front and rear from which archers could shoot down, hence 'fore-castle'. When cannons were introduced in the 16th century the need for 'castles' disappeared but to this day the name has remained.

Commish': Jack-speak, the period of time or commission for the deployment of a ship.

Wednesday 19-06-68 page 42

The three AEW Gannets from 849 Sqdn have been flown ashore to be changed with three others fitted with a pilots underwater escape system; these will join us when we sail from Pompey.

Helos carried out VERTREP with *RFA Resouce* (the helo I confused with *RFA Resquire* up on deck on Mon 10th).

"Still foggy"; Sqdns sent 'gear' to us for servicing; gear we had never seen before. Have to put in for a week-end pass in 'Brum' to go and see Jean and Ron and the kiddies - they are not expecting to see me for the next 10 months.

A few statistics have been promulgated regarding the ships armament, which has been used during this first 'work-up'

3 x 2000lb bombs
73 x 1000lb bombs
220 x 25lb and 28lb Practice bombs
2 x Torpedoes
80 x Practice Depth-Charges
20 x Marine Markers
30 x Flame-Floats

The Air Ordnance Section (AOS) in addition to their routine maintenance; the Bombheads have cleaned and serviced 75 Ejector Release Units (ERU's), and approximately 100 pods; the latter is the equivalent of 3,600 gun barrels.

"Anyone in need of a good "pull-through' should apply to the CAA (O).



As we steamed up, Nab-Tower to Pompey we passed a number of forts which are ancient remains of Portsmouth defence. They were ordered by Lord Palmerston. No Mans Land fort was completed in 1881 at a cost of £242,487 after twenty years in construction. They were built as France was seizing power, under Napoleon III and was a threat to us, but as they were never used they became known as Palmerston's Folly.

NB. at the time of construction they were painted red and white, now shabby and squat they serve only as platforms for lights.

!

Thursday 20-06-68

page 44

After a bit of confusion, it was decided that Port-watch of AOS would contribute to lining the deck for our port entry; that includes me, fortunately my No 1's are just back from the chogies so I changed and went up.

As we reached the outer buoys a couple of 'subs' and frigates passed us leaving on exercises. Each time we passed a boat we were 'brought to attention' and because of the amount of shipping in the harbour it became not unlike a PT exercise. The ship came right in under her own power and parallel to the 'Middle-Slip'. We were met by tugs, *Capable* and *Griper* (a paddle-boat) and *Boxer* who between them nuzzled us into position alongside the quay. For a fine morning, there were very few people to see our arrival. I had to 'turn-to' at the section to complete some work. Was duty tonight but I will be going on week-end leave tomorrow to Nuneaton.

COMPLETED MY FIRST PERIOD AT SEA

The ship will remain in harbour now until the 9th July 'Am looking forward to sailing in a warmer climate now.

The Journal was put on hold at this point and not resumed till we sailed again. At the time of converting the text I have little recollection of any events of the three weeks between. I did go to Nuneaton and must have gone to visit my Mum and Dad in Yorkshire. In a pub with my Dad and a close friend of the family, Harry Bolton (I'd had been brought up to call Uncle Harry) and he wished to give me some good advice to avoid contracting any sexually transmitted diseases. I never checked this out with the medical profession but the advice was as follows. "Once you have been with a woman go to the toilet and when the need to pass water arises, hold the end of your penis to hold back the water, try to release then wait till the pressure is great, and only then let your water pass like an explosive release and this may go a long way to wash out any possible infection before it takes hold. Was the advice sound? In all those months in the Far-East I never once contracted an infection/contagion though it was fairly common. Maybe I was just lucky. No I think I must have been 'Damn Lucky'.

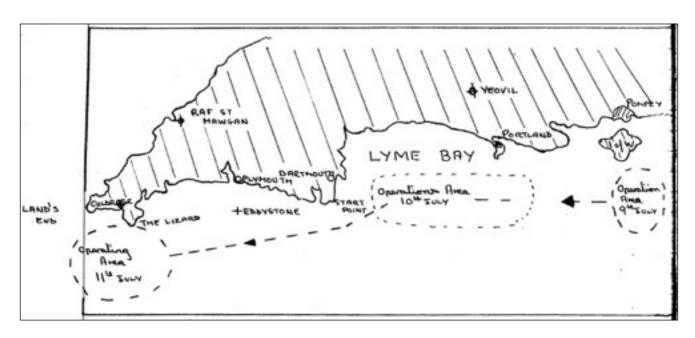
After some last minute work by the 'Dockies', the ship slipped its cables and telephone lines and at 1150 we left harbour, for the last time. This time I was not required to line the F/Deck, so I stayed in the workshop.

For the most, it was a fairly easy day; in the early afternoon we picked up the various Sqdn's aircraft which had flown ashore previous to our docking.

Ben Casey had not returned but a few people were prepared to lay-odds on him being somewhere insight of the departure chuckling to himself at what he had accomplished. I am sure that he will either be caught or give himself up though because of his responsibilities to his pregnant wife. He can't leave her far away.



The rheativariop Harbantes (Middles Slipp) storthast itirihen-dromingery/ workforce.



Drawing of: chart south coast operating areas.

Today the ship will be carrying out flying operations in Lyme Bay, to the west of Portland. Night flying will continue in this area. Later tonight the ship will move further west to fly south of The Lizard.

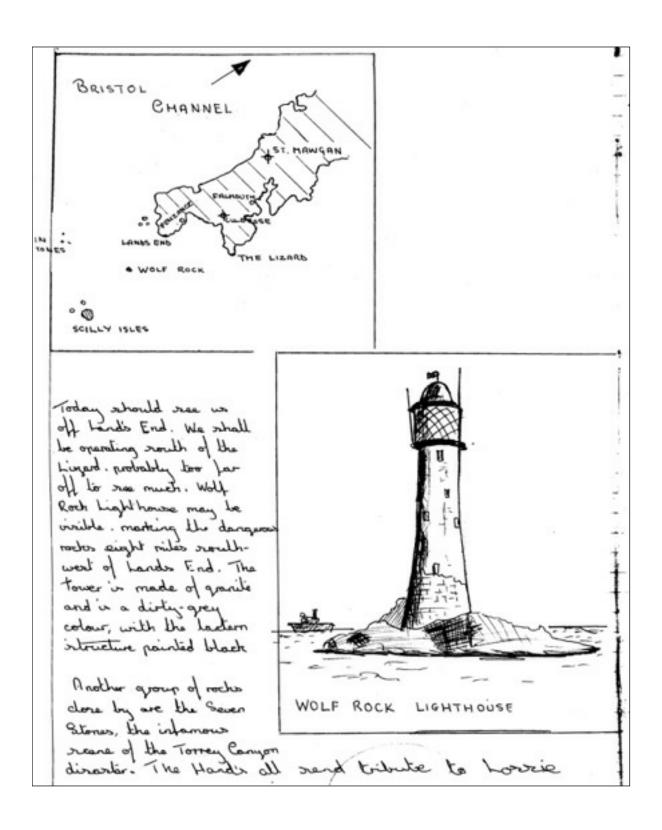
Wednesday 10-07-68 page 47

Went up for my beer tonight, and handed my card over to be clipped by the Reg' staff. I held out my hand to take it back, but he looked at my hair; decided it was too long and pushed my ration card down into his pocket and told me I could have it back after getting a 'good' haircut. I got my beer that night.

Beer: As a Junior rate and under 20 years of age I was issued with a beer ration card which entitled me to an allowance of two small cans of lager, which had to be purchased for 10d each (approximately 4 new decimal pence). We had to go along to the NAAFI flat and queue-up daily, on an evening. The issue and rationing was monitored by staff of the Regulating Branch (Naval Police). The card was clipped on the day indicating the issue had been made.

Naval Rank	Regulating Branch Rate	Jack speak name	
Leading Hand	Leading Regulator	Bone-Head	
Petty Officer	Regulating PO	Crusher	
Chief Petty Officer	Master At Arms MAA	Joss-Man or Jaunty	

Beer was issued to be consumed the same day 'officially' and usually was. However it was a form of currency enabling us to buy favours from each other e.g. covering duties. Near the end of the trip the accumulation and directing much beer over a period of time to one of the Wardroom chefs/stewards was to purchase us a feast of a party all courtesy of the officers' pantry.



Today should see us, off Lands-End. We shall be operating south of the Lizard Peninsula, probably too far off to see much. Wolf Rock Lighthouse may be visible, marking the dangerous rocks eight miles southwest of Lands-End. The tower is made of granite and is a dirty-grey colour, with the lantern structure painted black. Another group of rocks close by are 'The Seven Sisters'; the infamous scene of the Torrey Canyon disaster.

!

Next line a post-script in my hand writing; "The Hand's all send tribute to Lossie" This text is referred-to again on page 177 of the journal.

Wolf Rock: The final stone in building was put in place in July 1869 and exactly 100 years later I was passing it.

Only 13 years earlier (1955) it was converted from oil to electric as the light source.

It was manned and the change-over of staff was by boat.

The helicopter pad on this lighthouse was the first on any lighthouse in the world and was built in 1972. And this was to change forever the picture I drew in 1968

In July, 1988 the station was automated and de-manned and is now monitored from the Trinity House Operations Control Centre at Harwich.

Torrey CanyonThe 974-ft (297m) tanker, which was carrying 100,000 tons of crude oil, hit Pollard's Rock in the Seven Stones reef.

The bombing raids began on 28 March 1967, on my 17th birthday when eight Royal Naval Buccaneers set off from Lossiemouth in Scotland.

When the bombing plan commenced I was serving on 764 Sqdn also based at Lossiemouth and our Hunter GA 11 aircraft were also despatched to Cornwall and I think they were used to drop Napalm on the tanker in an attempt to set the leaking oil, in the holds, alight.

The RAF and the Royal Navy dropped, 62,000lbs of bombs, 5,200 gallons of petrol, 11 rockets and large quantities of napalm onto the ship.

Despite direct hits, and a towering inferno of flames and smoke as the oil slick began to burn, the tanker refused to sink.

"Hands send tribute to Lossie" This comment in the journal was written in, on Sat 15 Feb 1969 during a ships activity quiz called "Off the Cuff" played to the ships company over the Ships Radio Equipment (SRE). A prize of two cans of beer to anyone (the first) to produce a book with the word "tribute" written on page 48. I penned a post script but the organisers did not accept it as legitimate.

No mail was delivered today to the ship but papers were - some consolation. I was duty and stayed up till 2300, thinking I had the Cinema to clean-up but it seems that it is done by various mess' now on a rota system.

I went to the Reg' Office at 1930 to collect my 'beer-card and was told to come back at quarter to eight. When I went back, Bolt, the Master At Arms (MAA) was there, sitting back, lounging in a chair, with his belly looking as if it might spilt-open the front of his jacket.

He shouted across to me; I standing only 3 steps away from him, nevertheless he shouted, perhaps he was trying to convince me of his authority; there again p'raps he was trying to convince himself of it. "What time do you secure....boy?" (...boy !!).

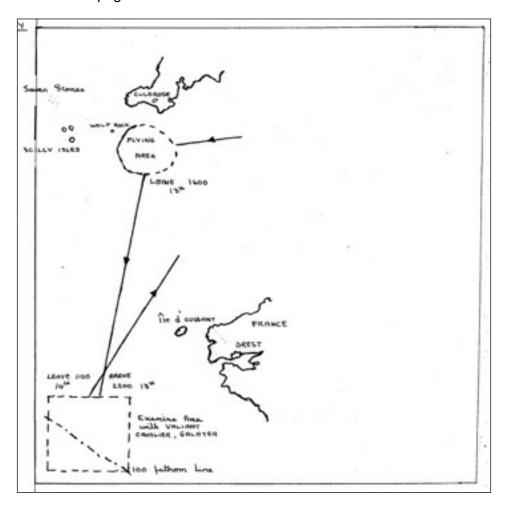
"1600 Master".....I choked on that, it must be the first time I called the MAA any name other than, Chief. "Yes well so do we", he stormed, "So get out".

I stood there thinking to myself ("you clever B.....").

As I turned toward the door he shouted after me to, "Come and collect it the following day during working hours".

I didn't want my two cans of chemicalised lager anyway, so I just walked out, without answering him. Let him keep it, I thought, he has saved me 1/8d, perhaps I'll not collect my card tomorrow either, because I don't like tinned beer much.

"Master" was the correct form of address when talking to the Master At Arms. It was the title conferred on the Chief of the regulating branch and the ship carries only one on the complement.



Drawing of sea chart, England to coast of France.

Back to Lyme Bay today (Friday). The ship will again be to the west of Portland, carrying out flying stations. On completion of these we shall move back to the Plymouth areas.

This is to get closer to the exercise areas where we shall operate with the nuclear submarine, *Valiant* on Saturday night



HM Submarine Valiant (S102)

Went to work with Fred (Taff) Gray on Ground Equipment; painting and servicing Air Weapons Transporters (AWT's) which were in the hangar - it makes a change from the W/Shop with the CPO's breathing down our necks most of the time.

There was supposed to have been a GCE Mechanics class today but I found that the classroom had been allocated to some stokers for an examination.

Tonight we carried out a 'Light Jackstay Transfer' with *HMS Sirius* (F 40). Sirius closed our stbd. beam and various lines were passed between us. After using the test-weight an officer from our side was passed over and followed by his bags.



HMS Sirius F40 (Leander class) 1966 - 1994

Pat (Ben) Casey who was 274hrs adrift was brought on board by helicopter from Portland. He has been given a bunk in our Caboose (Sunshine Corner) and Johnny Gasson had to leave by 'drawing lots'. This caused a lot of 'nause' among the lads who have spent some time in decorating this part of the mess. If when this caboose had been allocated to armourers all other AED ratings had been moved out this 'nause' would have been avoided. All the same, give a couple of days and it will be ironed-out, I think.

Johnny Gasson: before sailing painting and decorating of our mess 4N2 took place. I think Johnny was part of the painting party. During that time some property went missing and the police were called-in. They chose to dust some of the lockers for fingerprints. Johnny was so outraged that any of the lads might be considered responsible that he subsequently took-off his boots and socks and proceeded to place footprints on to the lockers. He was a popular lad and this act just about summed him up.

Saturday 13-07-68

page 52

Last night on completion of flying the ship set-off for the Plymouth area. Today we remained south of Lizard Point until 1600 carrying out flying exercises. From there we proceeded southwards to the exercise area with *Valiant*.

Refer diary page 50, the chart.

The reason for going so far south is to get to water as deep as possible for the benefit of the submarines. The 100 fathom line crosses the area where the depths drop fairly swiftly.

After a night of anti submarine exercises we shall meet up with our tanker, *RFA Olna* and carry out a RAS (L) on Sunday forenoon. After that we shall proceed up channel.

Sunday 13-07-68

page 53

The mail came on board this morning. M's letter came and that seemed overdue. Jean and Ron sent me my make-shift diary to copy-out into this book, but no letter came. Mum sent me a newspaper - but no letter.

Mail: Back then: no television, no e-mails, and no telephone links were available to us and so the mail was very important to all and a constant source of high expectation and equally great disappointment.

Make-shift diary: I had begun this journal as an 'exercise-book' with little concept as to the potential size. This Naval D190 Ledger book was to prove to be an appropriate journal.



Today, Ushant will again be passed as we go back to Plymouth areas. Many ships must pass but few see it, for the rocks in the area keep them well clear. There is also a very high density of vessels in the area, for

!

We were rocking and rolling like a corkscrew this morning. I was woken up this morning by the noise of people rolling around in their beds. It's true; anything they say about the Bay of Biscay; 20ft waves leaping up and around the sides of the ship. It was spectacular.

All of the shows which were to be put on for our benefit by *Valiant* were cancelled. Destroyer D73 *HMS Cavalier* closed our area and signalled that an officer on board had a broken back. We managed to get a helo airborne with a doctor who attempted to winch himself down onto the deck a couple of times but each attempt proved futile against the power of the sea that was knocking the destroyer about like a cork.

Loads of people were sea-sick on board; myself, I felt OK and was looking forward to my dinner. This afternoon I got my head down till supper time.

I've spent a lot of time on deck today when at one of the rougher moments I was standing at one end of F/Deck, the other end was one second way down in the water and the next second my horizon was a set of fleecy clouds.

Up by the steam catapults the wind was catching a Vixen that was lashed down, and lifting the nose wheel clear of the deck.



HMS Cavalier D73 Cavendish Class CA Destroyer

Completed on November 22nd, 1944

Took part in the Atomic Bomb tests at Christmas Island

In May 1967 she sailed for the Far East via the Cape; as the 6-day war between Israel and Egypt had closed the Suez Canal, returning to Devonport on May 30th, 1968

14 July 1968 she closed up on HMS Hermes in the Bay of Biscay. She saw service in home waters and the Mediterranean until the 23rd of February, 1969

Cavalier was decommissioned in 1972, the last surviving destroyer of the Royal Navy to have served in World War II.

On 14 November 2007, Cavalier was officially designated as a war memorial to the 142 Royal Navy destroyers sunk during World War II and the 11,000 men killed in their service. The unveiling of a bronze monument created by the artist Kenneth Potts was conducted by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. The monument resides adjacent to the ship at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham, Kent.

892 Squadron Aerobatics Team Simons Circus





CO 892 fly-past low-level at high speed

Tuesday 16-07-68

page 57

I should have started early this morning; I had asked Brum Hay for an early shake but his alarm clock didn't go off and I never woke up till reveille at quarter to seven. It took me about 10 mins to rise, stow my bunk, and draw our section keys and turn-to at the W/shop to open up. Fortunately no one else had got up early and the Sqdn's were in no rush for equipment so nothing was said about me being adrift.

There was quite a big bombing programme on deck which means, rush jobs on the ERU's tomorrow morning.

This afternoon the Chief gave me a Make and Mend so I got my head down for a couple of hours even though it would be hard to get to sleep tonight.

Brum Hay: LOEM Hay one of the killicks in our mess. At the age of about 26 years, he was one of the older fellows of our mess and with his nine years of service coming to a close he talked of leaving at age 27 to become a Newsagent in his home town of Birmingham.

Reveille: wake-up call to the ship played through the ships broadcast system. In 1968 we had bugle calls to announce to the ships company the various events of the day. Reveille at 0645hrs

<u>'Stand-Easy'</u>; another call was made at 1000hrs to announce 'Stand-Easy'. We all learned and sang with relish in tune with the bugle call "If you want to have a shit go now"

'<u>Hands to Flying Stations</u>' and the words to accompany this tune was: "Airey Fairies to your stations, to the flight - deck you must go"

A variety of other calls were made using a 'Bosun's Call' or Whistle; e.g. "Captain coming aboard" and during formal inspections of areas to bring people to attention and to follow it with the call to "Carry-On"

Daytime sleeping: I was to learn and in later times at sea to take advantage of what was commonly called a "Power Snooze" when sailors would regularly sleep for 20 - 30 mins after their lunchtime meal.

I was right about the ERU's; fifteen were waiting to be serviced when we turned to. Went up on the for'ard sponson of the F/D and took photos of myself, Dickie and Ozzie; all in colour.

These cannot be printed on board so they must be left till we reach Cape'rs (Cape Town)



Sea vixen 'a Bolter'

A 'Bolter': If during landing-on, an aircraft's arrester-hook fails to secure itself on one of the several arrester-wires strung across the angled-deck the pilot would be told from Flyco to 'go-round' again. Flyco would also initiate, the electrical firing of a red signal flare fired from one of two pistols mounted on the edge of the very front of the angled-deck. The red flare shot out to 'port' at about 60 degrees from the horizontal to gain the pilot's attention.

To avoid rolling off the front of the ship and into the sea, the pilot had just a couple of seconds in which to react; to demand 100% engine power, raise the arrester hook and get back into the air.

The cartridge (1.5" or {40mm}) pistol position was known as the 'Last Minute Negative' and was an unfurnished all metal compartment partially open to the elements. It was too low to be able to stand upright in it and had to be manned at all times during Flying Stations and the operator had to remain alert in order to respond quickly to reload a fired pistol in readiness in case the next aircraft also failed to arrest. There was no one to communicate with; though the operator wore a head-set enabling him to 'receive' only from the flight-deck 'loop', but the metal infrastructure diminished the quality of transmissions.

It was a task I shared with Dolly Gray for a period on our return to the UK. Six hours on six hours off. One occasion I miss-heard a message to say flying was complete (or that no more returning aircraft would be expected) and so removed the cartridges and on coming up out of the LMN's witnessed face-on, a Sea-Vixen in the process of a 'Bolter'. I had only a second or two to get back down to avoid the hot jet exhaust. I was then summoned to Flyco to explain why the LMN had not fired. Thinking quickly I told them with honesty that I had removed the cartridges believing from the garbled message that no more returning aircraft were expected in the immediate future. I expressed my concern for the open end of the cartridge exposed to the sea spray and getting damp during a long period of continuous flying and subsequently failing and I suggested that a simple solution was to cover the open-end with a small plastic sheet secured

with an elastic band, through which the flare could be fired and so improve reliability. I thus evaded the expected 'bollocking' and was praised for the idea I put forward, which was subsequently put into action.

We secured at normal time but on the flight deck musical PT was being held, followed by organised sports. The weather has been absolutely great.

This morning, after 'Shelter-Stations' down on 5 deck had been completed, I went up on the F/D to be equipped with Landing Party equipment. I never thought webbing could get so complicated:

trenching-tool and handle water-bottle 24hr ration packs 48hr ration packs 2 x 0.762mm magazine packs and a bayonet frob.

The guns we are to use are semi-automatic (*because the foreigners can't afford automatics sic*). Each person in the 'Landing Party' would in the event of emergency be issued with about 60 rounds.

The old story of shooting over the heads of mobs is 'out' nowadays; apparently it has no effect. Instead, the foremost rioter would become the target to be shot at. Also there is to be no 'Audie Murphy' performances like shooting the rioter in his vitals or his legs.....No! One bullet is all that it requires and the target is to be shot dead, if possible. Another point brought up is that no one enemy may be riddled with bullets, - "it's just not done" says the G.I. In the afternoon we did SLR practice off the after-end of the ship, as there was to be no A/C movement on deck. The targets were tins and boxes thrown from the quarter-deck. The shooting of each individual was atrocious; after one bullet had been fired a spray was thrown-up and the target went out of sight until the firing was finished. All one could do was aim in a general direction and raise the foreend to elevate the gun as the ship drew away from the target.

On the weather-deck, Dickie took a photograph of the setting sun with my hand holding a half pint glass of beer in the foreground - hope it turns out.

Before turning-in I went and listened to about ½ hours music by the Marines Band's pop-group; they're not bad......on tunes well practised.

Landing Party: this was a formal designated team consisting of 28 men (junior rates) with a single officer in charge.

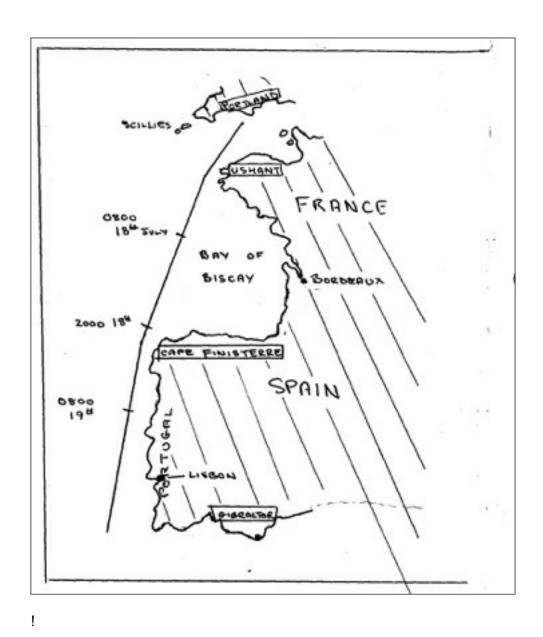
In the Far-East there had been unrest and the previous year Marines had to be sent into action in Hong Kong against Communist Chinese.

It was explained to us that in the event of civil unrest which threatened our national interests, we would be put ashore ahead of any further development by police and before any decision to send in the Royal Marines or Army. We would be tasked to confront and challenge and hold back any group intent on violent action. The example being give was 200 Chinese armed with, maybe, long bamboo poles with pointed, fire hardened tips.

Others in my squad expressed their concern and personal fear of being put into such a life threatening situation. As a direct result of which I felt concern that my well-being may become jeopardised not by 200 Chinese with long bamboos but by being in company with others who may not hold their nerve in such a situation. I harboured strong personal reservations regarding this.

SLR: Self Loading Rifle, this was a small arm which fired 7.62mm rounds and was a considerable improvement on the old .303" Lee-Enfield bolt action rifle on which I had been trained.

G.I. Gunnery Instructor



We left Portland last night (Wednesday) and set south-west at high speed. Today we shall be crossing the Bay of Biscay and will pass Cape Finisterre in the evening. We shall be thirty miles from the Cape and it will be just dark so little will be seen.

The high speed was to catch up with our support ships. They have been sent ahead. *RFA Resource* is the furthest away with *Olna* and *Diamond* in company close behind.

We should all meet up on the 20th early in the morning.

Cape Finisterre is a high rocky peninsula with steep sides. It has been the scene of many battles. It was here in 1747 that Admiral Anson lay in wait for a French convoy. His prizes came to 4 ships of the line, 2 frigates and 7 merchantmen. Most of the value of these prizes went to Anson. Since he had captured a Spanish treasure 4 yrs earlier he must have been a rich man.



RFA Olna A123 OL Tanker class (1966 - 2000)

Royal Navy Auxiliary Fleet tankers of the OL class: Olwen, Olna, Olmeda. Fastest and largest ships of the Fleet Auxiliary service of the mid 1960's. These tankers were designed with strengthened hulls for use in ice. Also all three ships were fully air conditioned and had landing decks, for helicopters as well as hanger space for two helicopters.

Regarding the intended re-introduction of the oil-fuelled fixed-wing carriers in the form of the Queen Elizabeth Class, a new Tidespring class of 37,000 ton oil tankers will enter service by 2016.

)

Again the weather has been beautiful; hardly a cloud in the sky. It is compulsory now to wear shorts; yesterday they were optional and those who had the courage to put them on had their lily-white legs laughed at. I spent the evening wearing my blue shorts and stayed on the boat-deck. Today, as the uniform is called for, the novelty has worn-off; it was red-hot. The CAA had me go down his mess and give a hand at tidying-up for Skippers (Fez) Rounds. At dinner time I should have gone down to his mess for a can of chilled beer (rewards) but instead I chose to go up on the F/D to get 'bronzy-bronzy'. The chief was up there at 1230hrs for a breather; he's got varicose veins which look pretty bad.

This afternoon there was little work on so we secured early. This evening I went up on the flight-deck, ran five circuits of the perimeter then went down to the quarter-deck to work out on the rowing machine; two lots of 50 on it with Dave Simkins and Dick Malfin. Dick has just been made-+up to Leading Hand today.

I bought an AFO from the chogies today and read it within a couple of hours; it was absolute rubbish.

I think M will have received my two letters by now and that there will be some post from her when I reach Cape Town.

Fez: Captain DG Parker (Fez) the skipper of the ship He was previously the skipper of HMS Fulmar (RNAS Lossiemouth). On completion of his time on the Hermes he went on to be promoted to Admiral. Origins of the nickname Fess Parker is a Hollywood movie-star (viz Davy Crockett)

Bronzy-bronzy: No surprise here, just a term used for spending time trying to gain a sun-tan.

AFO: Admiralty Fleet Order a grand sounding name for a very dubious publication. These were very short stories of a very explicit sexual nature. Produced in unbound paper-back form, with occasionally pen and ink drawings. The text was famous throughout the fleet for it poor spelling and grammar.

QUOTE: "Slub, slug she crid as he fugged her on the soda and the spug it dribled down her thigs." Photo-copy and scanning facilities did not exist for us, but these were printed and circulated around ships.

THE OLNA SAGA Heavy RAS today.

We began to get indications of problems during yesterday fore-noon. Despite the long distance apart, we had contact on Tactical Primary, and we were able to talk. She stopped with a main drain tank extraction pump failure and had water in the pump-room. Very quickly the F/D was cleared of the sun worshippers and one of the SAR Helos brought to the ready. One fault led to another and the planned RAS was cancelled; we may now arrive late in Cape Town or we may RAS with any 'opportune' tanker, for example RFA Bramble Leaf.

We secured at 1200 and during the dinner a pipe was made that mail would be taken off on Sunday morning, so out came, paper and scribes. I wrote to Ian and Mary and of course sent a letter to M. I finished writing about 2300 then after getting turned-in stayed awake and read till 0030.



An oiler between HMS Hermes and HMS Diamond

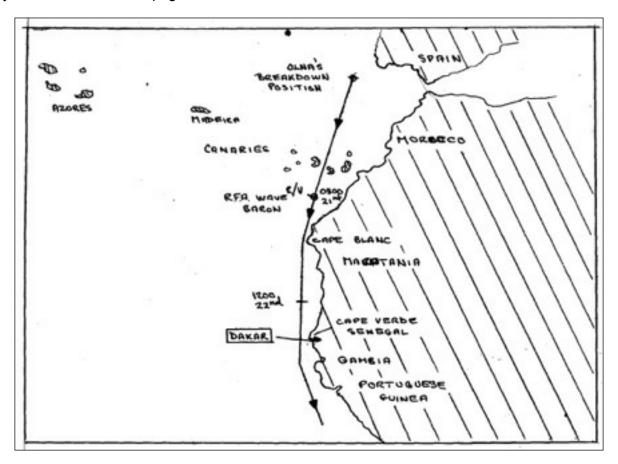


Chart showing r/v with RFA Wave Baron



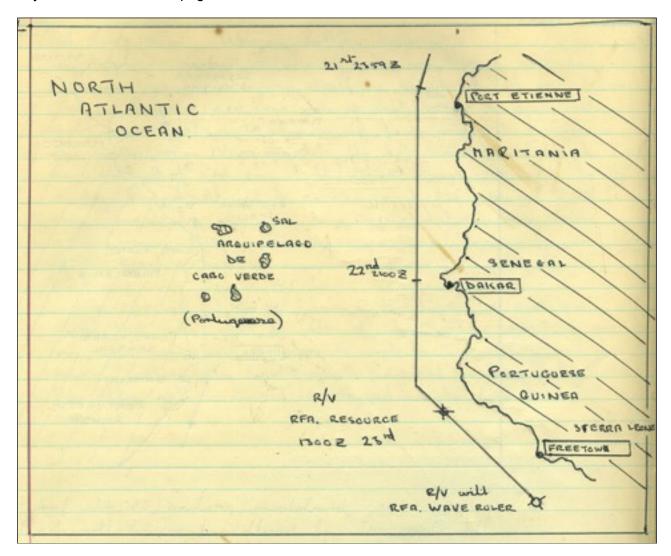
RFA Wave Baron A242

From *Olna*'s breakdown position (360 miles from Gibraltar), the ship continued south and passed through the Canary Islands during the middle-watch last night (Saturday).

Today we shall pass Cape Blanc, one of the western tips of the African continent. This will again be during the middle-watch, so that those up will see only the vague lights of Port Etine, the port of Mauritania.

At 1800Z we shall be 23° 40' north, 17° west

A quick clean up, an early secure, an early dinner and up on the flight-deck to sunbathe. We did a light jackstay transfer with *HMS Diamond* and brought on a couple of teams to have sports competitions on the F/D. I kept sunbathing and more sunbathing; glorious but I came down looking like cooked meat. The rest of the day I spent rubbing 'Germolene' into my legs.



Sea chart R/V's Resource and Wave Ruler

From the RAS (L) with *Wave Baron* we press on to the next RAS; this time with *Resouce*. En-route we shall have passed the western most tip of Africa; Cape Vert or (Verde). Behind this cape lies the harbour of Dakar, in Senegal, once part of the French Empire. The names of Hermes and Dakar are linked and even more so is that of 814 Sqdn.

Dakar until the mid 19th century, a native village, had become a thriving port, the third most important in the French Empire. It was also a modern naval base and situated, bang in the middle of Britain's trade routes to South America, South Africa and the Far-East. With the fall of the French in WW II it was imperative that such a vital base should not fall into German hands. Similarly the modern French warships would threaten England's shipping routes, operating from such a base. Dakar was well defended with booms, large shore batteries and a nearby airfield. To this port came the powerful battleship *Richelieu*, only just built. Measures were taken to immobilise this ship and this is where *Hermes* and *814 Sqdn* came in *Hermes*' aircraft were the selected weapon. She carried 11 *Swordfish* a/c (and incidentally had six 5.5" guns). Her Commanding Officer (Capt. R Onslow, MVO DSC) was made an Acting Rear-Admiral for the day and told to take charge of the assembled British ships.

Before force was used, Onslow sent in a destroyer with an ultimatum. The French turned down the offer of sailing to the West Indies and immobilising the *Richelieu*. By this time it was dark and an air strike could not be mounted until the morning. Admiral Onslow would not wait this long and sent in the fast motor boat of *Hermes* for a depth-charge attack. The boat under the command of Lt Cdr Bristowe reached Richelieu and

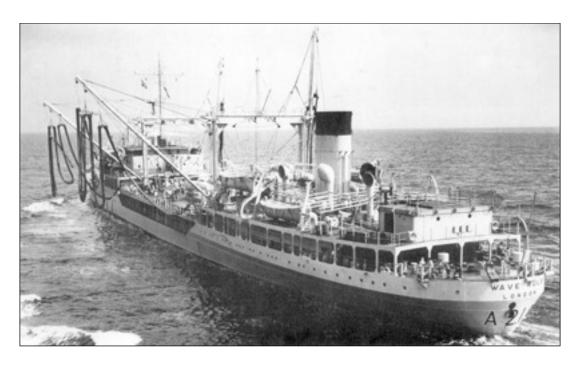
dropped her charges. Unfortunately due to the shallow water they failed to go off. However the response to the boat by the French forces caused confusion and in the midst of this *814 Sqdn* attacked.

At 05.05 on the 8th July 1940 Lt Cdr Luard led his Sqdn of *Swordfish* in a shallow dive over Cape Verde. Minutes later he released his torpedo, followed by five other a/c.

Heavy anti-aircraft fire had broken out, although all aircraft returned safely. Hits were obtained but details were not known although the French battleship was down by the stern. No further contacts were made. By this time *Hermes* herself was also under air attack from the French a/c, However she escaped them unscathed only to collide with the armed merchant cruiser, *Corfu*, two days later in a dense tropical storm. *Hermes* was badly damaged about the bows and the flight-deck, but reached harbour safely on 11th July 1940.

Started Airmanship class today; we got quite a laugh out of Power of Command by mistakes of those learning to take charge. Mickey-taking is all fitted-in with this course; it gives those in charge a chance to deal with it. The course lasts one week after which we will each have an exam to take; split: oral, practical and I believe written. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Alone one can think of all the orders to give - but once brought in front of everyone (the first time) some clam-up or give way to giggling like 'parties' at their mistakes.

'parties': naval slang for women.



RFA Wave Ruler A212 Wave class oiler



RFA Brambleleaf A81 Leaf class oiler (1955-1979)



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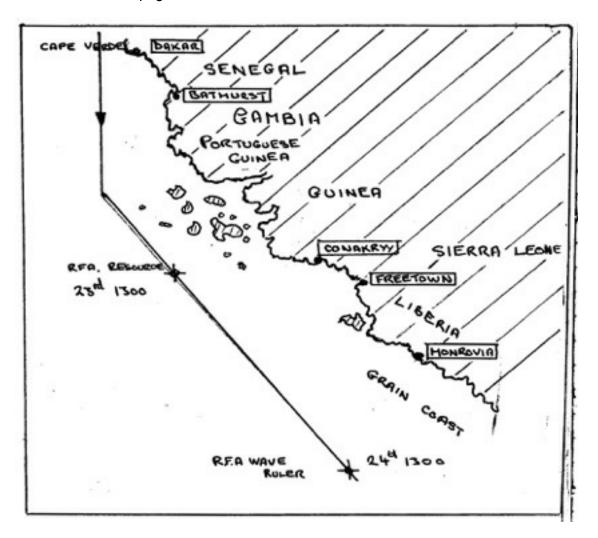


Chart of the Grain Coast

Today the ship altered course to 143° and is heading direct for Cape Town. This course will take us further away from the land. At the moment we are off the colony of Portuguese Guinea and the Republic of Guinea. Although discovered in1446, large parts of Portuguese Guinea are unknown, being covered in thick forests and mangrove swamps. There is a rebellion against the Portuguese rule; with an almost unknown war going on. (It has been televised as a documentary).

No doubt some support for this revolt comes from Guinea, the neighbouring country (it also harboured President Nkrumah after his eviction from Ghana). Guinea is an ex-French colony with a low lying coast, indented by many rivers, rocks and islands. This coast is dangerous, often unsurveyed, with shoal water a long way from the shore. The visibility is frequently bad and most ships keep well clear; as shall we.

During 'Power of Command' today I was brought out to take charge and give detail for 'removal of caps'. It went smoothly (without many snickers from the ranks).

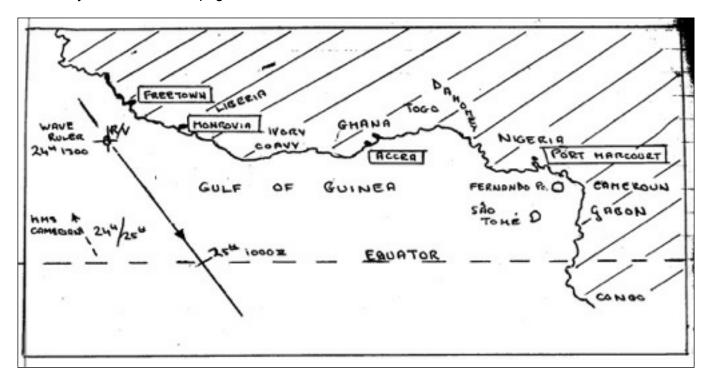


Chart approaching the equator

Today W. Africa recedes further and further away from us.

Ahead lays Cape Town and a couple of thousand miles of empty ocean.

Or is it empty? Around us and below us are many interesting displays of nature. Yesterday the most spectacular sight you may have seen was a school of dolphins leaping from the water and diving below the ship. Also to be seen were numerous birds; mostly Shearwaters, Petrels, (one came on board on Monday) and Terns.

The reason for this is, of course because their food supplies, mainly fish are more abundant. The fish are more plentiful because of the large amounts of plankton in the area. This plankton thrives in colder water and the Gulf of Guinea is an area where patches of cold water can be found.

Normally the sea is warm, but there are more or less constant up-wellings of cold water replacing warm water drawn off elsewhere. The cold water has come from deep down (the sea bed is 2,000 fathoms away) but before that it came from cold areas such as the Arctic ,or Antarctic travelling well below the surface of the sea.

Wherever these up-wellings occur they are responsible for a profusion of life. Some of the world's largest fisheries are dependent on up-welling. The South-West coast of Africa has an abundance of marine life. As of yet little harvesting of it has taken place, though countries such as Ghana are purchasing trawlers for this purpose.

Today the Ambassador of Neptune (Chief PTI) accompanied by his wife (CAA(O) 'Blondie Nicholls') visited us from their master's dwelling in his watery domain. He demanded the presence of the Skipper of the vessel so that he could be informed of the visit that the ship would be paid by 'He' who is responsible for those who sail the Seven seas. The skipper made clear that his Excellency would be most gratuitously received on board by himself and his SEA-DOGS (sweeping his arm in our direction as we stood on the flight-deck). The Ambassador then left; carried-off shoulder high to a rather discourteous, discord-playing band's fanfare.

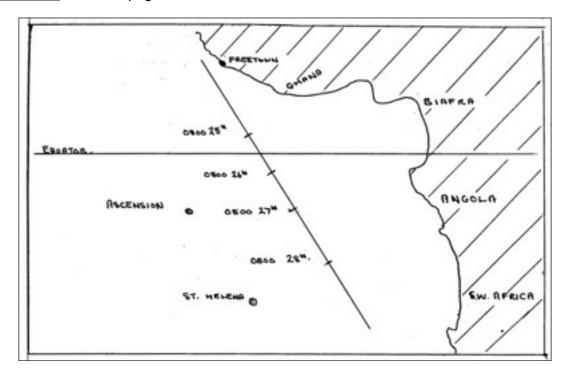
It is my first time over the equator and this ritual is performed on each occasion.



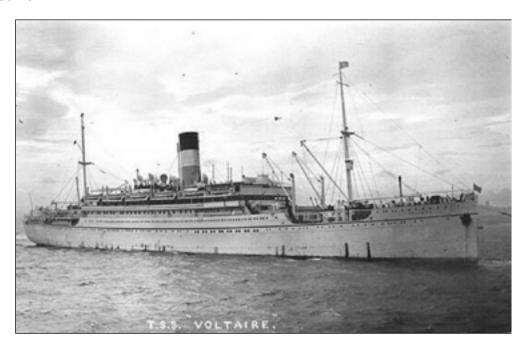
Aircraft ranged on the aft-end of the f/d

All variants of the aircraft borne are arranged in view from the island looking aft. The large salvage Mobile crane (known as 'JUMBO') is positioned where it is normally located during Flying-stations with a crew manned in readiness to deploy and clear the deck of any crash incident.

In the centre-line of the deck are two aircraft towing vehicles; All-Wheel-Drive (AWD's). These are powerful diesel powered tow-trucks with heavy weights mounted on the chassis designed to cope with the weight of an aircraft on a wet, rolling, pitching deck.



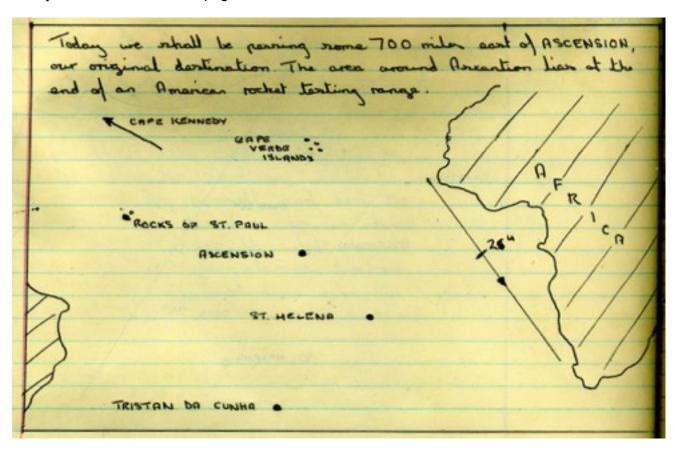
The ship is now well and truly into the South Atlantic. During WWII this ocean was a busy shipping route, particularly with ships avoiding Suez Canal. It became a hunting ground for German raiders, whether pocket battleships such as the Graf Spee or merchantmen converted into commerce raiders. Britain was short of suitable ships to search for those raiders and a number of merchantmen were converted into armed merchant-men cruisers [AMC]. When two such AMC vessels one British and one German met the odds were not on the British; *HMS Voltaire* vanished off Freetown while on passage. A patch of oil was subsequently sighted but to this day it is not certain how she sank. It is possible the German AMC *Santa-Crus* destroyed her.



July 2009: Search of the website http://uboat.net/allies/warships/ship/3333.html revealed:

On 4 April 1941 HMS Voltaire (A/Capt. James Alexander Pollard Blackburn, DSC, (retired), RN) was on isolated patrol in the central Atlantic, about 900 nautical miles west of the Cape Verde Islands: at 0615 hrs she was spotted by the lookouts of the German raider Thor (Schiff 10, 3862 tgr, 6 x150mm {5.9"}, 4-21" tubes, FK Kähler) and the ships headed for each other.

At 0645 hrs the opponents opened fire and by 0649 hrs Voltaire was ablaze, by 0715 hrs only 2 guns remained in action and by 0800 hrs she hoisted a white flag, sinking shortly afterwards by the stern with a heavy port list in position 14°30′N, 40°30′W. 75 dead and 197 survivors rescued by the Germans. In the action, Thor expended 724 rounds of 15-cm.



A chain of islands with gaps filled with ships and aircraft provide tracking facilities for rockets fired from Cape Kennedy. At 15,000 mph missiles hurtle toward Ascension. Only the nose cap is recovered; the body is burnt during its fall through the atmosphere. Radio signals, flashing lights and dye markers help planes and ships to find the cones. The planes come from Wideawake Airstrip on Ascension (where both *Hermes'* and *Eagle's* aircraft have operated from). To track the missiles, Ascension is liberally dotted with radar aerials, usually mounted on extinct volcano cones.

This morning we (in Airmanship) were given time-off to witness the "Crossing the Line" ceremony. The 'skipper' was decorated with old stinking kippers, to wear around his neck and after a few official dunkings in the water-tank the 'hands' were allowed to get on with their own ceremony. Everyone was grabbed, pasted with a bright yellow mixture of the chef's flour the dumped into the tank. I've been pulling off bits of caked flour since.

Gave Jim one of my tranquilizers last night to help him with sleep; on top of his head-ache. He must have had a lot better sleep than us; one 'doll' will guarantee 8hrs of oblivion.

Tranquilizers? Sometime before sailing my brother-in-law had been prescribed a medication (yellow capsules, Librium I think) which after taking only one and not liking its effect upon him wished to discard the rest. I took them with me thinking them as 'very special' and still had them when we sailed. Unlawful; improper, my action may have been but they did seem attractive to have in my possession.

The pop-group The Rolling Stones had an album in the charts in 1966 with the song "Mothers Little Helper" which referred to such 'little yellow pills'.

CROSSING THE LINE CEREMONY FRIDAY MORNING



The arrival of Neptune's ambassador.

I am in-shot foreground wearing a Armourers flight-deck shirt with white rectangle.





The dunking tank: I and Gusty Blowers are carrying Dennis McAlhone to be dunked





Photo 814 Sqdn CO takes the plunge



Neptune's ambassador and his missus Ambassador of Neptune (Ch PTI) accompanied by his wife (CAA(O) 'Blondie Nicholls')

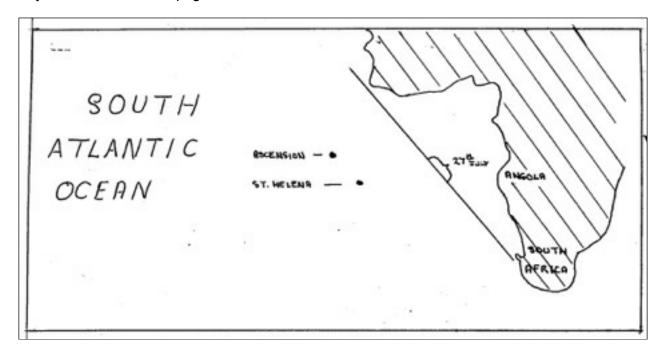
Note the fork being carried by Neptune with the label which reads 2½'s Trident.
2½ is a naval term for a Lieutenant Commander referring to the gold insignia worn on the sleeve of a uniform; two standard width rings separated by a half width ring.



Demon barber and the COD Bod (Pilot of the COD Gannet)

The special shaving crème is comprised of such delicate ingredients as Custard and Fish oil.

When crossing the line again in 1980 (RFA Fort Austin) the special guests of Neptune's Ambassador were given sweets to eat which resembled pink and white 'Allsorts' but were in fact rectangles of bread loaded at one end with Tabasco sauce



Sea chart; South Atlantic

Still in the South Atlantic though there is less than 1,750 miles to go. The ship will be opposite St. Helena to the west and Angola, a Portuguese colony to the east.

During WWII many strange ships were seen in the South Atlantic. Apart from German raiders and British Armed Merchant Cruisers, a type of Q-ship operated in the area. The idea was for these 'decoy ships' (code name freighter). This was all well and good if the enemy had abided by the 'Rules of War' and allowed merchantmen to abandon-ship before sinking her. The Germans however used an unrestricted or "sink on sight" policy.

Three freighters operated in this area, several more in other areas. They achieved nothing; a few were sunk without ever seeing their attacker and more troublesome was the fact that naval authorities were not told about them. Several Admirals sent forces after 'freighters' that appeared unmanned. They were lucky that none were sunk by their own side.

Sunday 28-07-68

page 74

Slept in late this morning; using airmanship as an excuse for not 'turning-to'. Apart from going to dinner I stayed in bed most of the time. Brought this diary up to date i.e. finished writing up about the period of the first 'work-up' in Moray. In all: a very quiet day with nothing to do 'cept listen to the radio and its old hits from charts of: 1964 - 65 - 66 which are played every night.

Today we shall be abreast SW Africa, about 300 miles from the nearest land. Cape Town lies only 800+ miles ahead.

This voyage seems long to us but is nothing to the months spent by the early pioneers of this route. Those original explorers were Portuguese, who left their coastal waters to strike out into the unknown. This remarkable change of habit was brought about by the inspiration of a landsman, who had never once navigated a ship and had been on only short passages across the Mediterranean. This man was Prince Henry of Portugal, later called the 'Navigator'.

Half English, half Portuguese, Henry was a successful General against the Moors. After a less successful campaign than usual he retired to Sagras in Portugal and spent his life organising the solution of the oceans mysteries. His particular concern was to make long voyages safe and to enable ships to 'fix' their position.

Previously, navigational fixes, out of sight of land were unheard of and if an explorer discovered a suitable route, he had little way of passing his knowledge to any that might follow.

Henry wished to reach-out to the riches and spices of the East; for the trade of India. The 'Moors' barred the way in the Near-East, preventing trade and they waged war on the 'Infidels'.

All Henry had to start with were seamen and suitable ports to equip his ships from. Neither he nor any other white man knew what lay beyond North Africa. No one, as far as they knew, had ever sailed that way before. True there was a tradition that the Phoenicians had sent a fleet southwards hundreds of years ago but they had never been seen again.

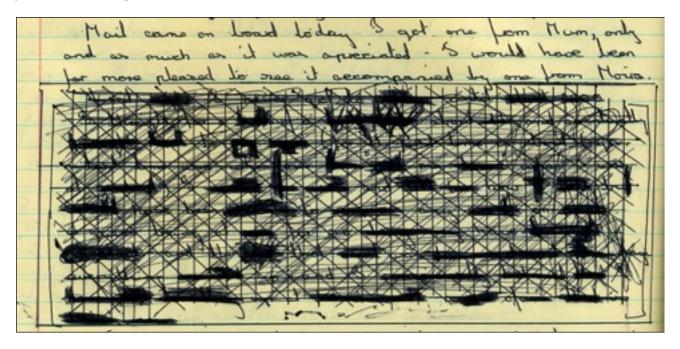
This did not daunt Henry. He reckoned there had to be a way around Africa, though how far south it was he could not conceive. He pooled all available knowledge of the ocean, called in the experts and devised a means of determining position in the trackless sea.

A big task; it took years of discussion, but eventually he was ready and sent a fleet of ships south. Led by someone we have all heard of, Vasco da Gama, this fleet headed into the South Atlantic to find the route we now follow, with so much ease.

As Airmanship class goes it has been a fairly easy day. Kit-musters were arranged for workshop lads and inspected by the CAA (O) and Lt. Penfold. I was due one at 1400 but classes held it up; no new date has been arranged for my muster in the near future.

Mail came on board today. I got one from Mum only and as much as it was appreciated I would have been far more pleased to see it accompanied by one from M.

The next eleven lines of text were scored out shortly after writing. I think I had expressed my emotions at the time (OK for a diary but this was always intended as a journal for others to read) and on reflection was too personal a feeling to share.



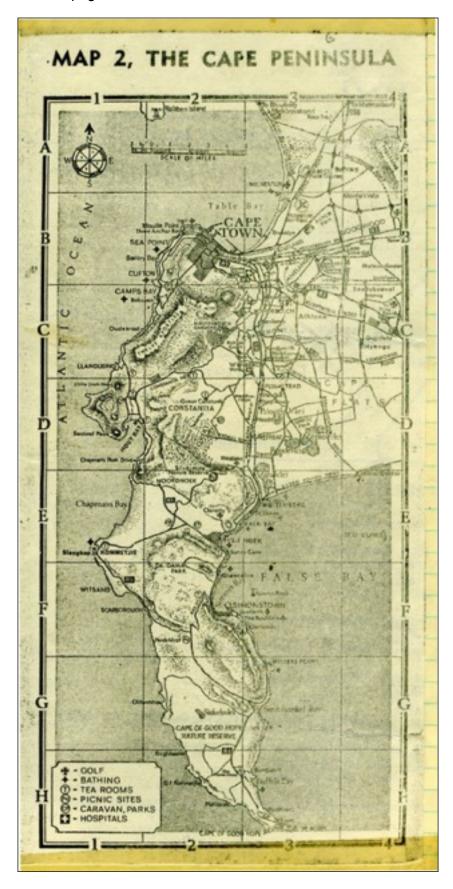
Tonight I went to see the Ship's concert: the marine's band played a few selections and a Lt. got up to sing a couple of songs from 'The Sound of Music'. During the interval the Ships Draw of £860 was carried out. The first prize of £300 went to a Junior rate.

The second prize £200 went to a Senior Rate.

The third prize of £100 was won by EM (A) Gelder (Geoff) a junior rating of this mess.

A further 10 draws of £25 went to the ships complement.

Somewhere among the thousands of tickets I had five; perhaps I'll have some luck with the next one.



Copy of the map of the Cape Peninsula

Tuesday 30-07-68

page 78

Airmanship today: exams. A few of the 'Chockheads' dripped about; how hard the 'Safety Precaution' questions were.

Being AED I found no trouble with them. The, Sub Lt. Clebbence asked me what I thought of the questions ('in my professional view' - he put it) as it took me only 15 minutes to complete them whereas only three others went through in the first 2hrs. He asked me to go round to his cabin to tell the others of the questions and answers. A few minutes later he turned up with "In Confidence" papers with questions and answers on them; he gave these to the lads to swot-up on.

<u>Chockheads</u>: Naval slang nickname for Aircraft Handlers; the tradesmen responsible for the flight-deck movements of aircraft; so named because of the wooden chocks carried by them. Handlers also are responsible on the flight-deck for Fire fighting operations.

AED: Air Engineering Department

Variance of the text: I think he told me he was going to his cabin (i.e. leaving the exam room without an invigilator) tacitly inviting me to tell others of the questions and answers.

CAPE TOWN

Today we hit Cape Town



Table Mountain from Table Bay



Some of what I saw of Cape Town was magnificent and successive governments had constructed boulevards and buildings to make statements of civilisation and grandeur, (see page 208 and 209 CT postcards) but there was an underlying tension and sense of violence when we strayed from the straight path.

I did not sit and recall each day in my journal the day's events of Cape Town but remember well that you could buy a bottle (75cl) of 'Cape brandy' for six shillings (30p in today's money) which you could take with you into a night-club but which you could not take back on board, meaning, drink share or waste before returning to the ship.

In one night club an incident occurred (Blacks and White mixing). One of the lads from our mess, I don't recall his name or his trade though not an Armourer, but can still picture his face. A very stroppy Jock; not particularly big, but given to giving lip and not backing down. He was in the basement when he was approached by a black man who invited him menacingly to hand-over his money. I think in the retelling of the account 'Jock' replied, "Awa tae fuck". The black man may have had no comprehension of Scottish dialect but he understood enough to produce a blade; a large blade, which he raised above 'Jocks head then turning it 'side on' proceeded to strike Jock twice on the top of his head. Jock grasped the situation quicker than I would have given him credit for and swiftly putting his hands into his pockets responded, "How much do ye want"?

Lessons in life were or being laid on for me (gratis) to learn when and what to react to and when discretion was the greater defence means to proceed.

Between the town's well lit Boulevard with its grass and floral areas, and the quay-side alongside which the Hermes was moored there was a wide stretch of broken land; unlit, rough grassland and dangerous (in the dark). One evening after some time in the town I was returning (I think with 'Dickie Bird') we opted for a taxi to take us back to the ship. The taxi driver stopped at a café close to the edge of the wasteland, popped in and returned to tell me that there was a couple of lads from our ship who were being targeted to be followed on to the waste ground and mugged. I went in and recognised the lads not as personal friends but a couple of 'Chockheads' I knew. At first they were reluctant to leave. I don't recall what I said but somehow I persuaded them to follow me out to a free taxi to take them back to the ship.

District 6 again.

The shops where Cape brandy could be purchased kept regular hours; same as shops back home. On another day, out of hours and intent on a night on the town I was ashore with, Dave Simkins and I think, Taff Gray and another. We hailed a taxi in the dark and asked him if he knew where we could get some Cape brandy before proceeding to a night-club. Sure he knew somewhere. We shot-off up the town unwittingly, into District 6. We stopped suddenly and without any explanation or warning the driver jumped out and ran. We were in an unlit area and abandoned. Alarm was the first response and even as we made a grab for the door catches to lock the doors, out of the immediate surrounding area people appeared and as they approached we were aware only of the whites of their eyes and suddenly the press of them against the vehicle which they began to push and rock. I felt fear at that moment and I have no doubt the others did too. The time was only a minute or two but the occasion made it seem forever before the driver returned. When he climbed back in Dave reached over from the back-seat to grab the driver and threatened to stove his head in if he tried it again. I don't recall if we did get brandy, but think we probably did and we had another night on the town, with brandy to drink; more than we could drink and unable to take it back on board.

Four days and nights in Cape Town; off the leash and unfettered. A teenager who saw the world in black and white and I don't mean apartheid. In dichotic terms: I liked or I disliked. I agreed with or I disagreed with and I was ready to drink deeply of 'life's cup'.

Why then the question mark in my journal.

Though I was essentially a 'good lad', keen to act and keen to do well, I had had overdone it in Cape Town. I had consumed a great deal of 'six shillings a bottle brandy' and for some days after leaving Cape Town, heading into the Indian Ocean I felt unwell. Off the workshop area where we serviced, stores carriage

Very un-incidental days and nights
I donated a pint of blood to Cape Town Hospital when their staff came aboard.



What happened?

Well what did happen?

Almost to the day 05-08-2009,

As I remember looking back, Caper's was declared a 'rigger's run' (uniform to be worn).

Because of the Apartheid rules in force at the time, requiring blacks and whites not to mix socially, black skinned ratings could not go ashore with the white skinned crew; this was seen by all as truly offensive and we did have some black ratings.

Ashore we discovered large oval shaped post-boxes with post facilities on each side. We mistakenly thought, at first that this was extreme black/white segregation but learned that the distinction was 1st and 2nd class post.

Walking through a municipal park we passed an old black man sitting on a bench. He asked quietly and politely if we had any cigarettes or coins to give him and as we turned to respond, seemingly from nowhere a white police officer appeared unclipping his pistol from its holster demanding to know, "is this 'black' giving you trouble?". We were caught off-guard by his aggressive manner but quickly adjusted to a sympathetic stance to provide a response to safeguard the position that the old man found himself in.

We did not like Apartheid.

We were conscious of some of the very pretty black girls around but aware that they were out of bounds for the crew of the Hermes (except for the black sailors).

The ship's company had all been briefed that when ashore "Not to venture into District Six of Cape Town". This was the declared 'black area' of CT. That was just too tempting to a young sailor visiting his first port on his great adventure.

District 6 was definitely on the agenda for me. Hank and I made our way up there during the day. We visited a bar where we found black and white together (spatially together but obviously not socially). There was an uncomfortable atmosphere. A middle-aged white man was holding court in his loud guttural 'Afrikaans' voice. We listened and it seemed to me as if he regarded himself as the epitome of 'the great white overseer' as one might picture astride a hose brandishing a long whip. In our naivety we could sense a feeling of sympathy for what appeared as a down-trodden peoples of this colony. We left, still in daylight and as we meandered around District 6; intent on making our way back to the 'white' area we became aware that we were being followed by three very big black men. We changed direction a couple of times and established we had been targeted. Hank suggested that we do not make an attempt to run; being so far from what we might regard as safe ground, that if it was to come to a fight we might as well save all our energy for the fight. Our pace increased, then we changed sides of the road and this only served to confirm that we were 'prey'. The gap was decreasing and my heart-rate was increasing. I wasn't averse to having to fight but this was not our territory and these guys on our tail were big. (This is not an over dramatised memory). To our relief as we approached the next cross road three uniformed Petty Officers appeared around the corner coming toward us and as we slowed and looked back; the three black guys turned and disappeared.

As a reader of this article you might surmise that I was never ever to re-visit District 6 again. You would be wrong and next time it would prove even more dramatic.

equipment for the squadrons was a storage area and I do recall being allowed to turn to, then make my way into the store where I could set myself down onto a large coil of rope and slowly return to normality.

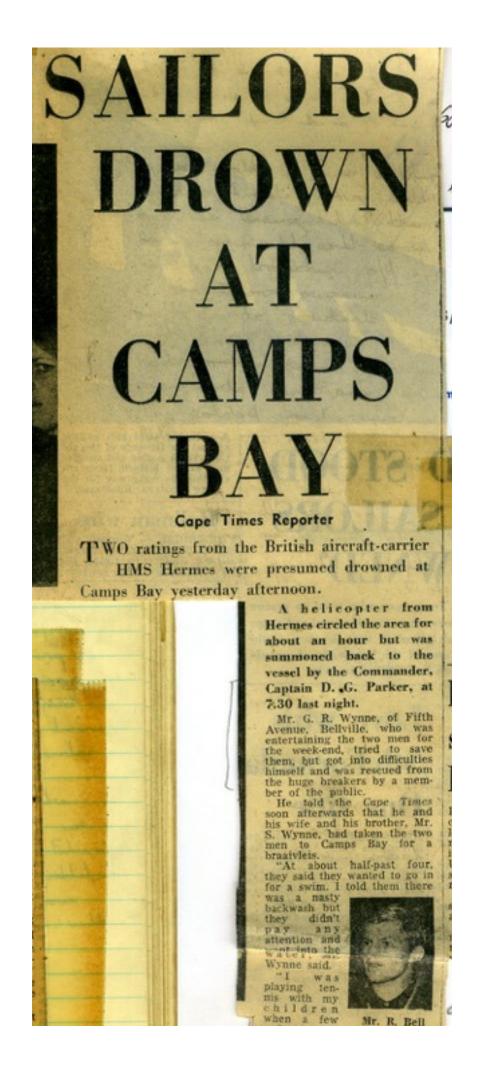
Google search: On 11 February 1966, the government declared District Six a whites-only area under the Group Areas Act, with removals starting in 1968 (the same year we arrived on HMS Hermes. Government officials gave four primary reasons for the removals. In accordance with apartheid philosophy, it stated that interracial interaction bred conflict, necessitating the separation of the races. They deemed District Six a slum, fit only for clearance, not rehabilitation. They also portrayed the area as crime-ridden and dangerous; they claimed that the district was a vice den, full of immoral activities like gambling, drinking, and prostitution. Though these were the official reasons, most residents believed that the government sought the land because of its proximity to the city centre, Table Mountain, and the harbour. Prime development land!

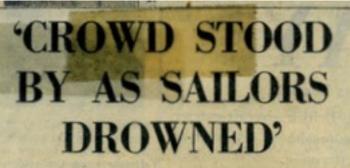
In 1968 forcible removal of black skinned people commenced. By 1982, 60,000 people had been removed to Cape Flats about 6 miles away.

Newspaper cuttings from the 'Cape Times'









25-YEAR-OLD Cape Town man who tried to rescue the two Hermes sailors who were drowned at Camps Bay beach yesterday, said last night that the men could have been saved if just one of the hundreds of people who gathered on the beach had offered to help.

"I was ashamed of my fellow citizens." he said. The man, who did not want his name citizens. mentioned, said that he had to ask for help to carry the heavy life line on the beach to the surf. "When we eventually got the

life line into position, the crowd trampled on it, and no one was prepared to get his feet wet by wading a few feet into the surf to hold up the line.

"Only one man offered his help. There were dozens of young men watching."

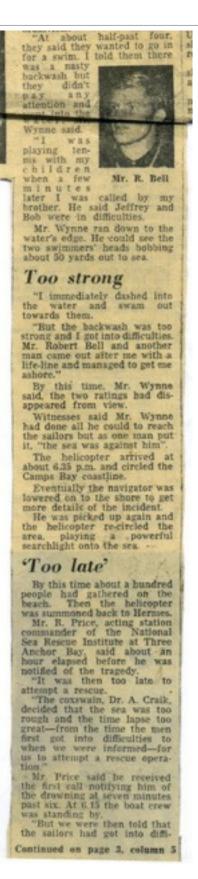
The men were able to rescue the seamen's host who had swum out to help the drowning sailors.

"But because the people on the heach had not kept the life line taut. I became tangled in and could not reach the

Love wins 5th Formula One title

JOHANNESBURG. — John Love driving his Lotus Ford clinched the South African Formula One? the South African Formula One? championship title for the fifth p successive year when he won the 40-lap Rand Winter Trophy race at Kyalami here on Saturday.

He went into the lead from the start and steadily pulled away from his nearest rival Basil van Rooyen, driving a Repeo Brab-



Back to sea for us: for the next 5000 mile leg, to Singapore. For the most we have enjoyed Cape'rs. The scenery is great; mountains with the town built up from the shore into their bases. Monkey Road (struck through and inserted, Government Ave.) a path to avoid after dark but during the day is a great walk - it is an unmetalled road for pedestrians, about 1 mile long with an overhanging avenue of trees lining it. The grey squirrels up here are very tame and will come up and eat nuts out of our hands. Branching off from this road are a number of the town's museums and large mansions of the well to do residents.

I never got onto Table Top as the cable-car had broken down. Instead we; (Jock Henderson and Dave Simkins) went into the Game Reserve but owing to this being the coldest winter here in years; 70°F, the only wild life in the park - apart from ourselves was two hairy caterpillars we saw on the path. We went then by bus to Sea Point; noted for its restaurants, had steaks The waitresses were black and could not talk to us (as is the same with most cafes and eating houses). They will smile and say, "Hello", but that is it! "End of story". It is all because of the Apartheid Race Bill down here.

The night clubs here are full of the gay life (2009 insert this was the old world meaning of 'gay' before it became commandeered in later years) which runs to quite an expense if kept up regularlyand we kept it up often, till as late as 0330Hrs of a morning. Having to be back on board by 0800, (the Navy will take care of all of JACK's interests)!!

In the summer there is boating, swimming, surfing and Big Game reserves to visit and of course the mountains to go up. We may (according to the Mayor of Cape Town) be visiting here again in March / April 1969 on passage home, which will be late summer then, down here.

I've 3 weeks to recuperate from my runs ashore before we hit Singa's and start all over again. When we were up on the side of Table Top we could look down at Camp Bay where the two lads were drowned. We said ourselves at the time "How rough the sea was"; permanently white water with the breakers over the rocks and a strong backwash.

Given my Preliminary Professional Examination (PPE) papers to swot-up on. I hope to take the exam as soon as I am 18 and a half years old; the earliest time it can be taken.

Back to sea: this missive as written does not give any indication as to how I felt for a couple of days after sailing. I was utterly wasted from over consumption of alcohol (Cape brandy primarily) and awoke feeling very sorry for myself. Amazingly the Chief AA and the section were sympathetic and allowed me to spend my morning out of sight, in the workshop store sitting on the coil of rope there. I presume the way I presented myself was considered punishment enough for one who drunk deeper of 'Life's Cup' than was necessary at our first port of call.

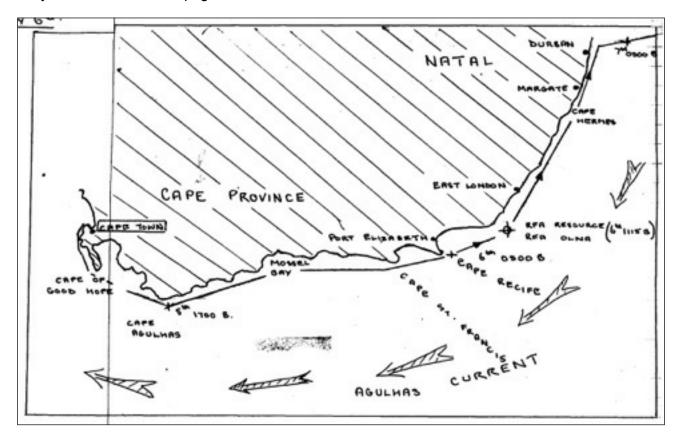


Chart of Southern tip of Africa

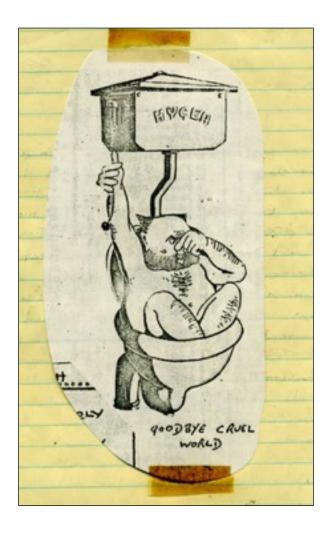
Leaving Cape Town the ship headed off in a southerly direction. The Cape of Good Hope was rounded during the lunch hour, and the next headland to be passed was Cape Agulhas the most southerly point of Africa at 1700hrs last night (Monday). Instead of then striking out direct for the Far-East we kept close to land hugging the coast. This was to avoid the Agulhas' Current which flows very strongly (up to 5 knots). By being close to the shore it is hoped to pick up a counter current.

This route gives us an opportunity to see the eastern coast of South Africa. During the fore-noon we shall be off Cape Recife, where the town of Port Elizabeth lies; (where *RFA Olna* should have gone to). Miles of beautiful sandy beaches can be seen. Then after a rendezvous at 1115 hrs we shall pass a rather monotonous coast line with high cliffs stretching for miles without break.

I went down to the Pay Office and started an allotment to the Halifax Building Society back home (never want to get caught on the hop).

At dinner time I had to go down to the Stores Dept. and helped out the Solids RAS from RFA Resource.

We got a 'pipe' today to say that we would be sailing into a Force 8-9 with gusts of 85mph here in the Indian Ocean; everything is being lashed down though it should be no worse than the spell we had in the Bay of Biscay



Pipe: Instructions and actions aboard could be broadcast by recognised shrill calls [piped] on a Bosuns Pipe [a non-diaphragm whistle]. Still in use in 1968 for ceremony but the electrical Tannoy system provided the bulk of messages to the ships company. The message could be referred to as 'piped'.

Halifax: 2009 interestingly how in very recent times this company was brought to its financial knees by a common practice by banks of excessive lending to higher-risk house purchase schemes. In 1968 it was necessary to have been demonstrating to the potential lender (Halifax) that the lendee could save regularly (up to five years) before being considered for assistance with house purchase.

Solids RAS: Replenishment to a ships consumable material took place at sea whilst under way by RAS (S) Solids, RAS (L) Liquid, and RAS (A) Armament.

Wednesday 07-08-68

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We RAS with RFA Olna and RFA Resource between Port Elizabeth and East London.

Disaster later-on; during a transfer between ships, a bag containing Rand (to be distributed ashore to help the poor of Sector Six in Cape Town) came adrift and was soon being left astern. A couple of smoke-floats were dropped and also a life-belt and the SAR scrambled. It was safely recovered and later we found-out contained the sum of R17,000

I am starting to go up to the work-shops on a night now, where there is a bit less noise, to study for PPE. As an exam I reckon it's a waste of time; it's just learning 'questions and answers' 'parrot fashion', which is easy to forget and in another four years time I'll have either forgotten most of it or be in Civvy St. Still between now and then there will be no other 'pussers' exams and I can settle back to do a civvy tradecourse; in electrics probably.

PPE: Preliminary Professional Exam. There had to be a process for selection and promotion through the ranks [notwithstanding 'Battlefield Promotion' viz WW1 and WW2]. The written exam itself was not technically difficult but was in place to sift those who were prepared to get off their backside and sit the exam, before joining a roster based on age, time served and annual write-ups followed by recommendation. Only after a period of 'Acting Local', successfully passing a trade course and Leadership Course did the rank become substantive.

It proved wise as I learned later in the commission that I would not be eligible for redundancy and in fact within three years I was attending a career course to become a Leading Air Mechanic (Ordnance) at Lee on the Solent.

Rand: The currency of South Africa. It was a common practice on departing a port to invite all the crew to deposit any remaining coins they had to a pool which was then landed and given to some charitable cause.

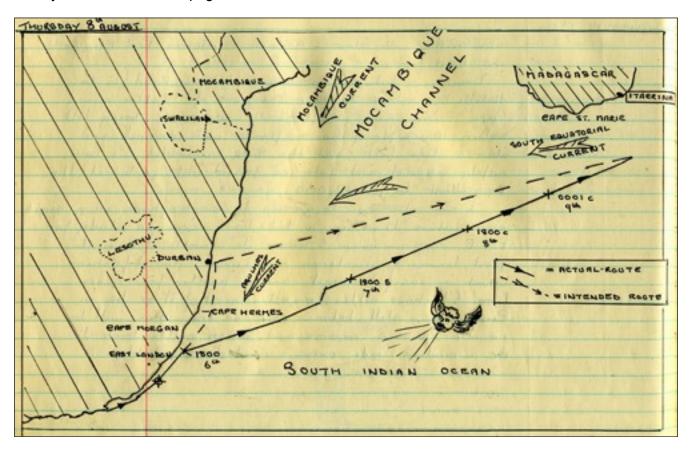


Chart Africa to Madagascar

Yesterday's incident caused an alteration to the ships intended track. Instead of proceeding up the South African coast we struck out direct to Madagascar. Even so, on this course the gale was fairly fierce and made its impact on us all. The ship was slowed considerably but that was particularly due to the Aghulhas Current.

By today we shall be out of the Agulhas, only to be forcing on against the South Equatorial current. On top of this a lot of time has been lost which has to be made up. We can therefore expect high propeller revolutions as soon as the weather allows.

Tonight the ship will pass 100 miles south of Madagascar

Message received from C in C Western Fleet: "Good luck on your Eastern leg"

Changed my POSB allotment from £4.00 to £1.00 per month; the money I get extra in my pay will still go into my POSB but from my own pocket in future where I can easily get at it instead of having to send it back to the UK to Harrogate where my money was going before.

As it is now I can draw as much as £30.00 at a time, on board here. This POSB routine is not for saving but a means of safe-keeping my pay.

POSB: Post Office Savings Book. When saving by allotment (today's equivalent of a Standing Order) the fund would be building up but could not be drawn without posting the book back to the Post Office offices in Harrogate to have the payments entered by hand and posted back.

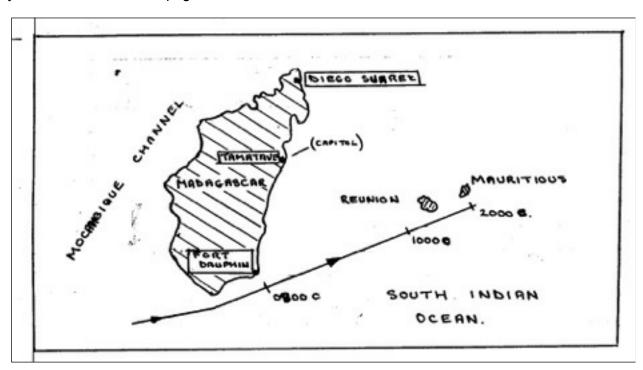
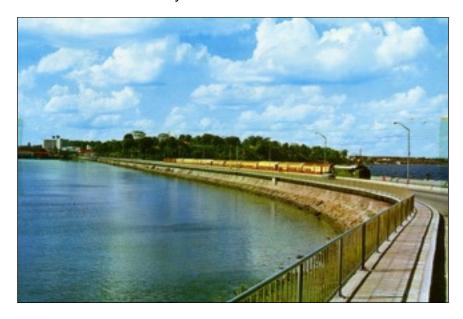


Chart Madagascar

Today the ship will be some 75 miles SE of Madagascar heading north-eastwards towards Mauritius. The island of Madagascar was a French colony until recently when the newly independent state called itself Malagasy. The island is about four times the size of England and Wales and is fever ridden. Early colonists stood little chance of survival.

By travelling south and now back north we have experienced two winters in the last six months and now we are heading toward our second summer this year.



The Causeway - Singapore

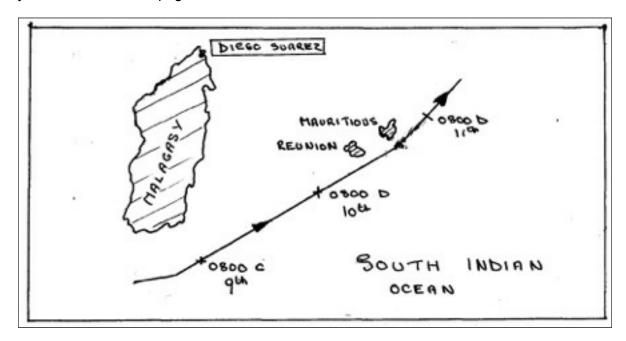


Chart South Indian Ocean

Yesterday the ship left Malagasy to port and proceeded toward Mauritius. Today we shall pass the island of Reunion during the afternoon at a range of 30 miles. An old French possession, the island was first discovered by the Portuguese navigator, Don Pedros Mascarenhas. It was unique in that no animals or man lived there.

There are plenty now, all introduced from elsewhere. Reunion has belonged successively to the Portuguese, the French, the British and then finally to the French.

For a while it was known as Ile Bourbon but after the 'year of revolution' (1848) the name became more republican. The island is of volcanic formation. There are many extinct craters and one (La Foumaise) is still active. It is in the south-east part of the island and about 40 miles from where the ship will be 1400-1500.

If visibility is good enough it will appear on the horizon as a dark smudge sticking-up about 2 degrees of elevation.

Tonight the ship will pass twenty miles off the south-east corner of Mauritius and then alter course north-east toward Gan.

Mail came aboard at 1700 - received letters from Jean and Mum & 1 newspaper - nothing from Lossie though.

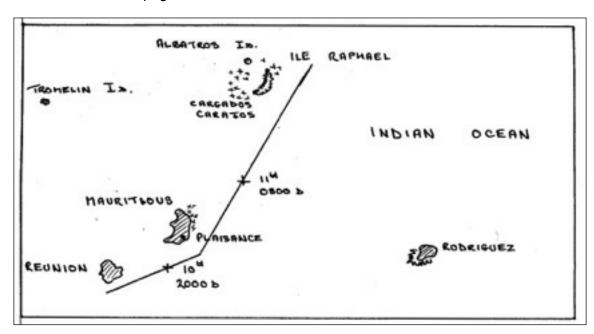


Chart Indian Ocean

Around Mauritius there are a number of small islands, all administered from Port Louis. Rodriguez Island is the largest and lies some 300 miles to the east of Mauritius. It is of volcanic formation and very hilly.

Most of the inhabitants are of African descent, who fish or farm for a living.

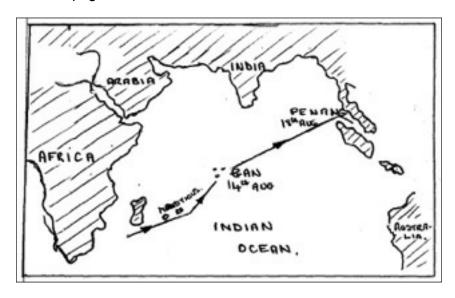
Further away, to the north-west of Mauritius, lies Tromelin Island; a mass of rock only 15 ft high covered in sand. A meteorological station is maintained there.

Around both of these islands lie reefs of coral. Closer to the north of Mauritius, there is an extensive group of reefs, islets and shoals called Cargados Carajos (known locally as St Brandon). Tremendous seas are always breaking over the reefs, though a few islets manage to sustain life. The largest of these is The Raphael with 24 fishermen, one weather station and a clump of trees.

Many birds come to St Brandon to breed and it is this month, August, that is the peak season. Enormous numbers can be seen on the islets; indeed some of islets are partially covered in guano. The deposits of guano are commercially exploited by a company in Mauritius.

Received my assessments from Lt. Penfold, I'm to be classed 'Superior' on my docs; good for recommends, where it came from I don't know. I'm usually sitting on the bench-top when the boss walks in or standing around the work-shop. I am to have my photo published in my local newspaper back home as "Local boy in the Far-East" or some other rubbishy statement that is good for Navy publicity (Ugh!) and a write-up about how much I am supposed to like this Ugh! career and what: good food, life, money, (Ha! that's a laugh) I'm enjoying. As long as it's not me who has to make the write-up I'll go along with it.

Superior on my docs: Annual staff assessments, Superior is the top level available and 'docs' refer to my service documents.



Drawing Indian Ocean 'Gan'

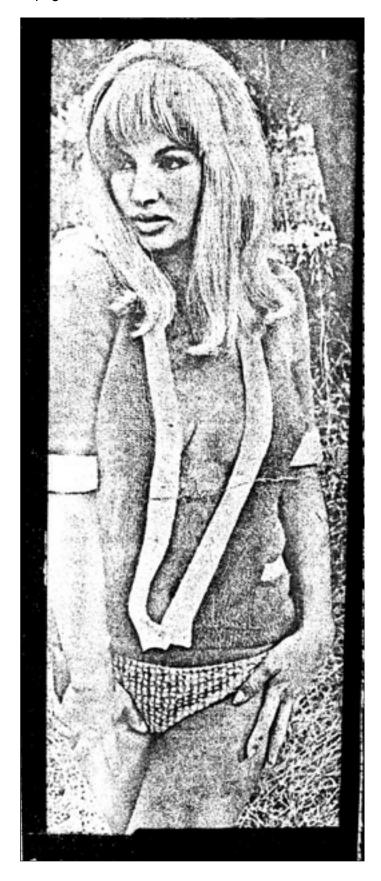
Today the ship continues north-easterly towards Gan. No islands or land other than the sea-bed, is near and the latter is 1,000 to 3,000 fathoms below us, (or 1 to 3 miles).

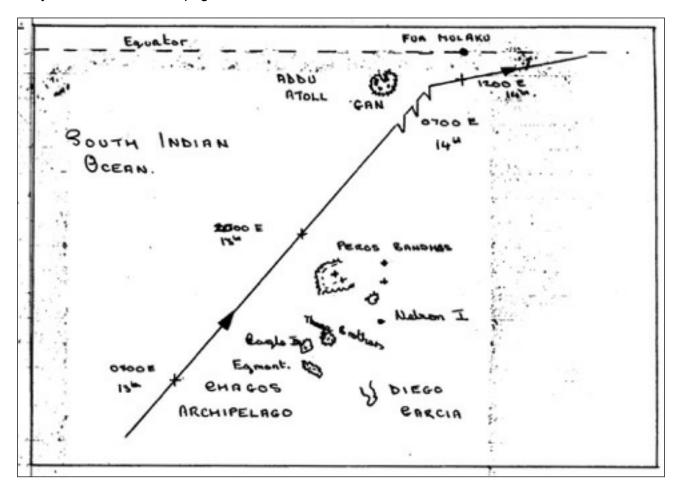
Ahead lays the Chagos Archipelago, at about six hundred miles, the closest coral atoll. The Indian Ocean is studded with these coral formations but even so there are vast open tracts of sea. Where the coral comes very close to the surface islands are formed by sand piling up. Unless vegetation grows successfully, such islands are liable to be 'moving'. Small ones can shift a mile in two or three years.

Today I got through my kit-muster no trouble and this afternoon had my 'press photo taken in the workshop, 'servicing an ERU' with a big 'cheesey grin' on my face. Hope it turns out alright 'cos it's going home.



Post-card of Singapore airport





Drawing of chart CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO

Today the ship is passing 100 miles to the west of the CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO. A dependency of Mauritius; it consists of numerous islands and coral reefs. The most remarkable feature of this archipelago is the general atoll character of the islands, reefs and banks.

The islands to the north are leased by a company in Mauritius. Copra is the principal product and all of the islands are covered in tall coconut palms.

In the south-east lies DIEGO GARCIA which achieved temporary fame as one of the proposed sites for British air bases in the Indian Ocean. A peculiar choice for it is only 3ft-5ft high and subject to constant alteration; being at times washed away at one part and raised at another. However four European families manage to survive there with 569 Creoles. The lagoon is infested with sharks.

2009 looking back on events

Consider an average height above sea-level of only 4ft. At sea level, the atmospheric conditions are such that a 10,000 ft (3,048 m) runway can be considered an adequate length to land virtually any aircraft. That would include the largest, fully laden, bomber aircraft.

During the Cold War and with Britain declaring an intention to withdraw from East of Suez, the Indian Ocean or a base there from which to deploy ships and aircraft became of strategic importance.

In 1965, when Mauritius was negotiating its independence from Britain, the then Prime Minister Harold Wilson made it clear there would be no deal without the Chagos Islands being separated from Mauritius, and retained by Britain.

The islands were of great strategic significance - situated right in the middle of the Indian Ocean - they were in the heart of an area prized by the then Soviet Union and China.

What Mauritius did not know was that Britain had already done a deal with the United States - they would lease the largest island, Diego Garcia, for use as an air base and ship refuelling station.

But the Americans did not want a "population problem", as they put it.

There were about two thousand people living on the islands, mostly working in the coconut plantations. Descendants of African slaves and Indian plantation workers, the Chagos islanders had lived there for generations.

Families were accustomed to taking periodic trips to Mauritius by the only boat available.

Once there, they found a return passage was refused to them.

This policy continued for several years, until the programme was stepped up. The plantations were closed down, food supplies ended, and then in 1970, the people on Diego Garcia were called together and told they would have to leave.

The people were told by the British administrator they were being evicted. He told the people, "There will be changes in the way the place is run. In a few weeks time you will not be able to stay. The military will come and you will have to go,"

All this was only revealed in 1975, through a United States congressional inquiry into the Diego Garcia military base.

But even then, the British government tried to cover it up. They claimed the Illois (French for Islander) had no right to live on the islands, and said they were just temporary contract workers from Mauritius and the Seychelles.

In fact, declassified Foreign Office documents discovered at the Public Records Office in London reveal the policy of deception.

Embarrassment: Extracts from an on-going news article by John Pilger of ITV

One memo, dated 28 July 1965 says: "A small number of people were born there and, in some cases, their parents were born there too. The intention is, however, that none of them should be regarded as being permanent inhabitants of the islands."

On July 28 1965, a senior Foreign Office official, TCD Jerrom, wrote to the British representative at the United Nations, FDW Brown, instructing him to lie to the general assembly that the Chagos Islands were "uninhabited when the United Kingdom government first acquired them". This Brown did on November 16 1965. He also misrepresented the population as "labourers from Mauritius and the Seychelles" for whom Britain's obligations under the United Nations Charter "did not apply", and he lied that the "new administrative arrangements" had been "freely worked out with the ... elected representatives of the people concerned".

In a secret memorandum, a Colonial Office official, KWS MacKenzie, spelt out the truth. "One of the things we would like to do in the new Territory," he wrote, "is to convert all the existing residents into short-term, temporary residents by giving them temporary immigration permits, describing them as inhabitants of Mauritius or the Seychelles."

Reading the files, it is clear that the British government did as it was told by Washington. Mass deportation, wrote a Foreign Office official, "was made virtually a condition of the agreement [with the Americans] when we negotiated it in 1965".

It was not until 1975 that the US Senate revealed that the British government had been secretly "compensated" for the Chagos with a discount of \$14m off the price of a Polaris nuclear submarine.

On November 3 2000, in the high court, Lord Justice Laws and Mr Justice Gibbs stunned the government. Citing the Magna Carta, which proscribed "Exile from the Realm" without due process, they unanimously squashed the 1965 ordinance used to deport the islanders as unlawful.

2004: Bill Rammell, the Foreign Office minister responsible for the Chagos, employed the same sleight of hand that the Wilson government had used to expel the islanders in the 1960s, when he sent an order-incouncil to the Queen for her rubber-stamped approval.

This overturned the Chagossians' high court victory of 2000 in its entirety and banned the islanders from ever returning home.

Richard Gifford (legal representative) and the islanders refused to accept this and were back in the high court 2005. On May 11, 2006, two judges found, unreservedly in their favour; describing the government's behaviour as illegal, repugnant and irrational. The government is considering an appeal, knowing that the Americans, having attacked Iraq and Afghanistan from Diego Garcia, are furious. The bombing of Iran is planned to take place from this British territory.

As late as 2015 controversy continues to surround: the lawfulness of its historical acquisition and the current use of the islands. To a Superpower intent on supremacy the strategic importance of Diego Garcia cannot be underestimated.

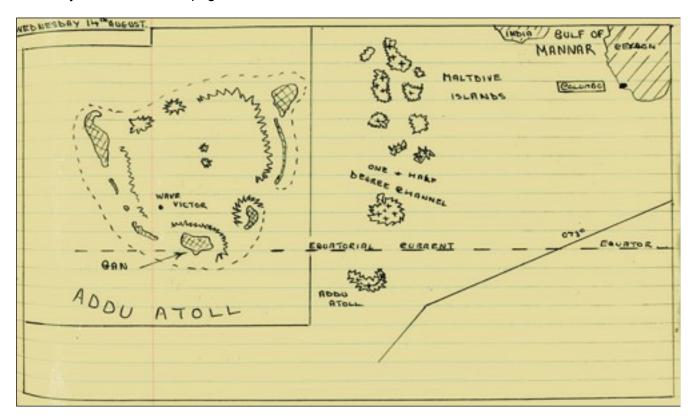


Chart: ADDU ATOLL and MALDIVES

During the forenoon today the ship will be carrying out flying operations some 30 to 60 miles east of Gan. Just south of the equator, ADDU ATOLL (of which Gan is part) is one of the smallest atolls in the Maldives Group. The islands are very fertile and are thickly covered with scrub and some large trees. There is a population of about 6,000 natives, the majority living in the NW corner or the atoll.

The RAF maintains a staging post on Gan, the southern island. The island of Gan is a loan to Britain from the local Sultan, which expires in 1990. Inside the lagoon, a tanker, *RFA Wave Victor* [A220] is permanently moored to replenish RN passing ships.

18.00E 0025°N 76°15'E

Mail left early this morning and other returned at dinner-time and was distributed in the afternoon.

My score was: 4 letters, 1 POSB chit ('not bad').

Up on deck testing a G-Dropper, I had to lie down on my back and support the dinghy pack with my feet, after slinging the pack from a Gannet wing-pylon. I was down not more than 3 seconds when the heat of the deck burnt into my back; that would be just as we were 'crossing the line' for the second time - but this time northbound.

2009 looking back:

1) Gan: Gan was first used by the British in 1941 as part of WWII fall-back in the event of Singapore falling to the Japanese; being a deep water facility. Later it was developed for use as a staging post from 1957 and it was finally returned to the Maldives in 1976. The runway on Gan was only 2.6 km long. The equator passes through the south tip of this tiny island and the only accommodation for tourists is called Equator village.

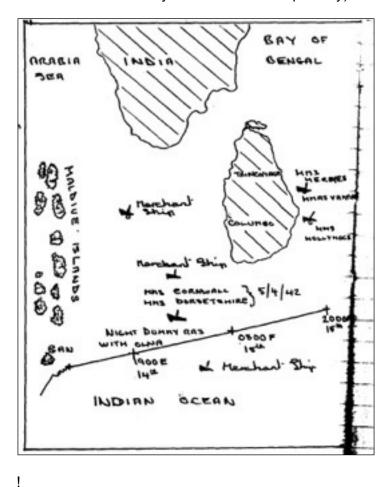


RFA Wave Victor A220 (1943 - 1981)

3) G-Dropper: A, G-Dropper was a dinghy pack which could be under-slung from an aircraft and used as part of a sea rescue attempt by releasing the pack to men in open sea (presumably downed airmen). One such drop was recorded in the Narrative report "Black Tuesday over Namsi by Earl J McGill, 23 Oct 1951 a battle event during the Korean War.

From Gan the ship set off for the Penang areas. Today we shall pass 240 miles off Ceylon. This is the closest approach to the spot where our predecessor *HMS Hermes* was sunk.

In 1943 she was sunk by Japanese dive-bombers who inflicted 40 hits with 250lb bombs before the *Hermes* finally turned over, with a loss of 19 officers and 288 ratings. *RFA Pearleaf* also in the area escaped (by curious coincident her successor is just south of the 'ship' today).



Drawing of the chart showing the killing ground of 1942

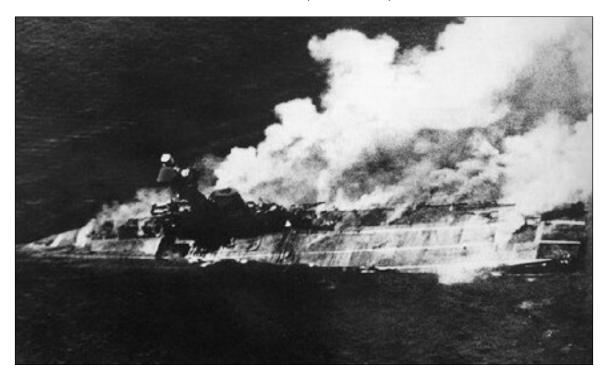
Went to see a film about; Venereal Diseases (VD) in the Far-East. The doctor commenting throughout the film made it clear how to recognise a 'dose' (clap) and what to do; namely get to the Sick-Bay as fast as possible, for the earlier it is detected the less damage (both mentally and physically) it can cause such as: arthritis, blindness and madness, death of future children.

Lesser things of course go through in stages; one being impotency, enough to put a lot of people off the 'clap-carriers'. The women out here can be clean looking and yet be carrying it, unawares to "JACK", "PONGO's" and "RIFF-RAF" alike. It is said by many who have been before that the PRO\$TITUTES out here stop if they 'catch-the-boat-up' as is in their own interest to be clean when out on the game.

This is 'old wives tale' and almost every 'pick-up' is a potential carrier. The only positively clean ones are virgins and they run out of maidenhead between 6-9yrs old out here in the bad areas of the Far Flung.



HMS Hermes (1919 - 1942)



HMS Hermes sinking 9 April 1942



Photo entering harbour



About to berth

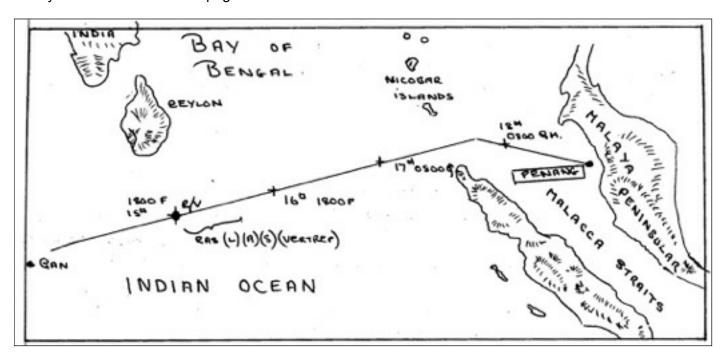


View toward Table Top from the bows



Table-Top from the round-down

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Drawing of chart passage to Penang

From today's RAS the ship will be proceeding direct for Penang; passing north of the island of Sumatra. *RFA Regent* will be in company with *RFA Olna* trying to catch us up.

The nearest land is the Nicobar Islands some 400 miles away.



Post-card of Nathan Road, Kowloon, Chinese mainland

Today the ship passed north of Sumatra and headed direct for PENANG. Those of us up for the kite-flyex will have Pulau RONDO; a small island, five miles to port. On the other beam Pulau WE (both of these are Indonesian -- I wonder what sorts of intelligence reports were made, by shore reporters on seeing an aircraft-carrier flying kites).

Sumatra is the largest island in Indonesia and is bi-sected by the equator. Not surprisingly it is a hot spot, with mountains, jungles, sterile plains and mangrove swamps. Very few people live there. Like most territories in the area, Sumatra has passed through the hands of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British and finally back to the Dutch, becoming independent in 1950. The island is rich with wild life; tigers, tapirs and lemurs are numerous. There is a peculiar species of elephant and also a rare white rhinoceros having two horns.

After supper, I went up on the flight-deck to have a look at the islands; Pulau Rondo and Pulau We, also the northern tip of Sumatra. There was a fair bit of head-wind coming over the bows and every time I tried to 'take a wet' of my tea the gusts sucked it out and blew it over my face. The islands are covered in jungle which covers the mountains as well. The inhabitants must be very few and fishermen at that. It would be a very poor place to stop for 'Hands to Bathe' as there are strong winds, strong currents and sharks. Tomorrow will see us, setting -off down the Malacca Straits. A few years back when Indonesia was not on very good terms with Britain, carriers passing down these straits were continually harassed by gun-boats; if anyone had been unfortunate enough to fall overboard it is doubtful that the ship would have stopped to pick them up as it may have been provocative towards Indonesian relationships, which were already holding out very precariously just then.

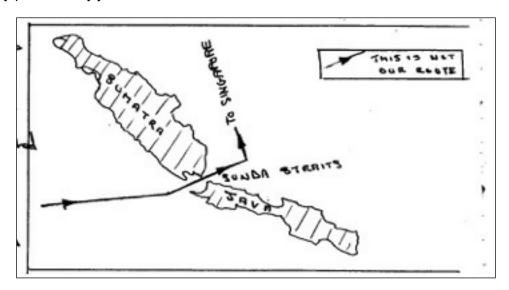
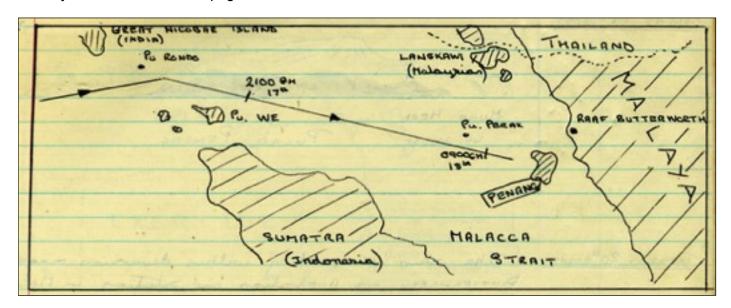


Chart Sumatra/Java

To pass through these straits (Sunda Straits) the ships have had to have aircraft fully armed on the catapults to be launched at seconds notice owing to hostile gunfire which could have been encountered from both sides.



Drawing of chart Malacca Strait

Today, early we passed the tiny island of Pulau PERAK, a peaked barren rock (white from large deposits of guano) it is high and steep; and it is the resort of numerous sea-birds. We should pass it about breakfast time.

It had been a very easy day and mail came aboard to ease things this afternoon; then after anchoring about a quarter of a mile off Pulau PENANG we went into Operation Awkward stations (STATES: 1 - 2 - 3).

AWKWARD is a condition whereby the ship is under assault by divers attempting to attach mines and other charges to the hull of the ship; under the water-line. The ship has to be at anchor, for obvious reasons (ever seen divers swimming along at about 20 knots)? And this hazard has to be prepared for, by exercises in peace-time. This exercise tuned out to be a farce.

I and Dickie Bird went up on a boat-deck to look out for bubbles from enemy aqualungs. We were armed with SLR's but no ammunition - not even blanks. We had no hand-grenades; not even 'Thunder flashes'. We did have a pair of binoculars and a 'Pussers torch' which had restricted use (ie.... On......Off...) and what you didn't see in that short space of time is missed.

We could hear a stupid argument between two officers about lowering one of the boats. (The 'pigs' are all in competition with each other to prove their competency - result, nigh-on chaos).

There was an incident where a diver got into difficulties and had to be 'hauled-in'. Just after that all divers were withdrawn owing to excessive swell (and that was farce).

The exercise was finished, uncompleted at about 2100hrs though it had been intended that it should have lasted until midnight. I came down the mess, disgusted with the organisation and considered it to be a 'fair weather' navy I was in. If we were to assimilate war situations (conventional ie.) the participants should encounter all but the real thing and not be pampered to the state whereby the exercise is cancelled owing to the weather conditions. Wars don't stop because of squalls, rain or swells. So why should we? (Life risk is negligible with safety services provided). Bah!

SLR: Self Loading Rifle which was introduced into service to replace the old Lee Enfield .303" bolt action rifle.

Thunderflash: A hand thrown pyrotechnic charge used during exercises to simulate action.

Pussers torch: A hand held torch with the lens set at right-angles to the body and a clip to enable it to be clipped to the clothing and to illuminate in a forward direction. The torch is low technology and has a heavy usage of U2 batteries. Ironically 40 years on and the self same torch is still in common service use.



Pusser's right-angled torch

That I was writing of grenades and thunderflashes, serves to show a naivety on my part. At no time would you drop sonic effect pyrotechnics into water in the vicinity of operating divers. Sound devices exist for signalling to submarines.....not divers.



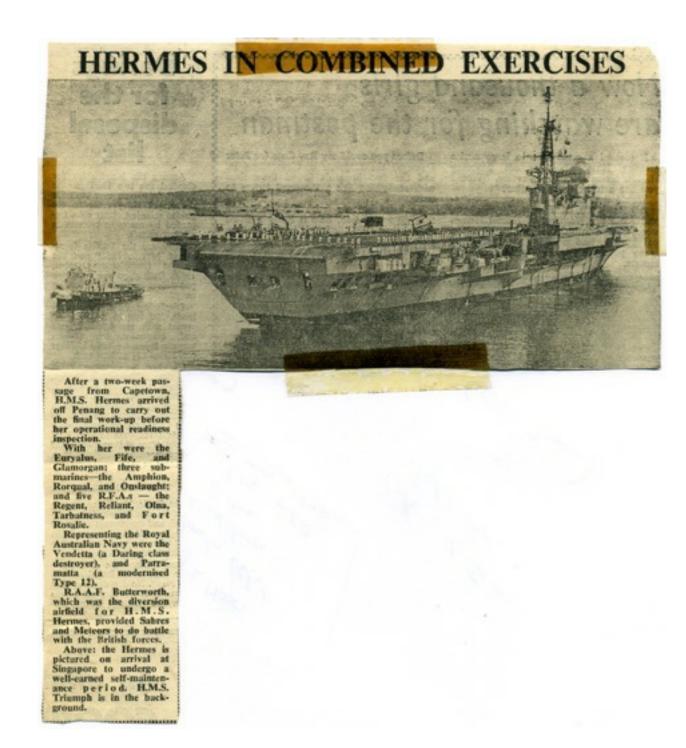
Drawing of the view of Penang from the ship

Tuesday 20-08-68 page 100

The ship is operating within diversion range of RAAF Butterworth, an Australian air station in Malaya. Most of our time is spent off-shore of Pulau Penang (Pulau = Malay for island). Some of us saw it on Sunday night when we were anchored, two miles off, Muka Head. It is thickly wooded, and was once a Dutch settlement, the remains of which lie beneath the vegetation that has long since reclaimed its own.

Nearly every day the island will be visible, sometimes fairly close, and sometimes distant. It is a picturesque place whose features have been eulogised by travellers from the earliest times. The northern part is mountainous, dropping height to the south. All of the island is well wooded and is separated from the mainland by a strait one and a half miles wide. Georgetown, the island's town is situated on this side.

In 1997 I visited Penang which had been made accessible from the mainland by a bridge. The practice of burning crops in Sumatra was in place and the resultant dense smoke which engulfed the area made the bridge crossing somewhat surreal. That is: driving out over the sea away from the mainland quite unable to see the island destination. The sun was largely blotted out most of the time.



Newspaper cutting

- 1) Hermes arriving in Singapore and HMS Triumph is visible in the background
- 2) Print article describing British and Australian forces present.

Royal Navy:

HMS Euryalus, HMS Fife, HMS Glamorgan, HM Submarines: Amphion, Rorqual and Onslaught. RFA's: Regent, Reliant, Olna, Tarbatness and Fort Rosalie.

Royal Australian Navy:

HMAS Vendetta D08 (a Daring class destroyer), and HMAS Parramatta (a modernised Type 12) RAAF Butterworth on Penang provided aircraft, Sabres and Meteors.



HMAS Vendetta D08

HMAS Vendetta an Australian built Daring class destroyer went on in 1969 to serve and gain battle honours during the Vietnam War



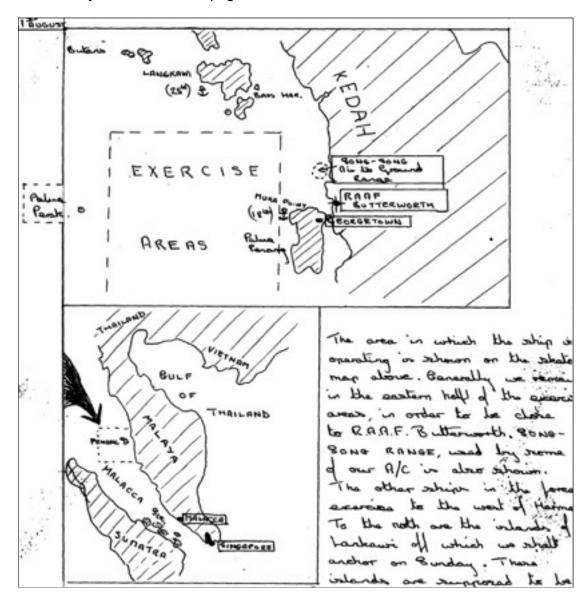
HMS Triumph A108 (previously R16)

HMS Triumph (R16) (1944–1981) was a Royal Navy, Colossus-class light fleet aircraft carrier; CVL. She served in the Korean War and later after reconstruction as a support ship.

In 1950, Triumph's, Seafires and Fireflies hit airfields at Pyongyang and Chinnam, the first carrier strikes of the war.

In 1952, HMS Triumph was used for the first trials of an angled flight deck. Her original deck markings were obliterated and replaced with new ones at an angle to the long axis of the ship. The success of these trials led to the development of the now standard design with additional areas of the flight deck added to the port side of the ship.

Triumph was then converted, between 1956 and 1965; into a Heavy Repair Ship emerging from the work with the pendant number A108. Triumph was based in Singapore after her conversion, being involved in a major exercise in 1968 in the Far East, with numerous capital ships from the United Kingdom and other nations taking part, as well as dozens of destroyers and frigates.



Drawing of sea chart Langkawi

Drawing Malaya peninsula

The area in which the ship is operating is shown on the sketch map above. Generally we remain in the eastern half of the exercise areas, in order to be close to RAAF Butterworth. SONG-SONG RANGE, used by some of our aircraft is also shown.

The other ships in the force exercise to the west of the Hermes. To the north are the islands of Langkawi; off which we shall anchor on Sunday. These islands are supposed to be picturesque and "wrapped in wild and rugged beauty". The west coast of the mainland is, in contrast a practically unbroken line of mangrove swamps and mud flats. From these swamps emerge crocodiles and sea-snakes. Crocodiles have been seen as far out as 30 miles from land in the Malacca Str: some grow to a length of 24ft. True sea-snakes are very common in the Strait. They are very poisonous and can be distinguished from harmless water snakes (also common) by the flat tail, rather like an oar.



Photo of prang on deck (1) Vixen



Photo of prang on deck (2) Vixen

Thursday 22-08-68 page 103

This is my third day without a single letter! **O!@ .!

Spent the afternoon on the Alaskan Highway; cleaning rocket pods. There are four of us on this job but only two are needed, so two of us go up on alternate days. It is a way to get the 'carriers shop' ratings a bit of sun regularly (a tan looks good on the colour photos) which we need or else we would all burn once we started going ashore in Singa's without being primed first.

We are to be among the first batch to be billeted ashore in 'Changi' barracks (AED that is).

We anchored this afternoon (1430) off Langkawi; along with *HMS Fife, HMS Glamorgan, (Flagship), RFA Reliant, RFA Regent,* a few other RFA's and a number of Aussie frigates.

As we approached the islands we passed a few fishermen attending their fish-traps.



Drawing of the fish-traps

I have not seen any of the sea-snakes or croc's, though because of the amount of gash thrown over the side I wouldn't fancy taking a swim now as it attracts sharks who would see little diff' between the gash and ourselves and probably take a 'yomph' at us.

Fishes have no morals, have they? Eating our shit.

At 1930 we weighed anchor and headed back to the exercise area - east.

This is: I HATE POSTMEN WEEK.

'Changi': RAF Changi. In the event we were never billeted at Changi.

Langkawi Pulau Langkawi

Fine weather and fair sea, little to do and mail came aboard. We had to show the CAA (O) our kit which had been missing or un-marked. I showed the name on my shorts (which I had just painted on before he walked in) told him; my other shorts were in the 'Chogies' and 8's were in the mess. He let it go at that. Everybody was picked-up for their lanyards, but only Fred (Dolly) took any up so as he came out of the office he passed his on to me and when I came out I passed them on to Ozzie. Dickie was short of a set of 'eyeshields' so Ozzie passed his on to me, I walked into the office and said that Dickie must have dropped them. All in all between us we had everything.

My photos (for the local gazette) turned-up today.

SERVICING AN ERU IN THE FORRARD W/SHOPS.



Official photo of me 'servicing an ERU' in the carrier-shop

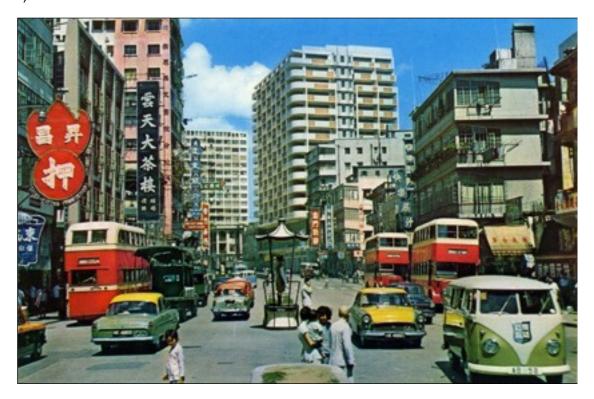
SIGN - ON!

Saturday 24-08-68 page 105

Arrived: Admiral O' Brien: Commander, Far-East Fleet, followed by Rear Admiral Griffin.

They came aboard to see our visitor who arrived in the last Buccaneer from Lossie; First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Michael Le-Fanu.

The admiral had an informal walk-around the ship during which he visited our workshops. There was none of this "Stand to Attention" lark; we just carried on while he asked one or two if they were enjoying themselves on here. They said "Yes" (ratings rarely say "No" even if they are not enjoying themselves).



Post-card depicting Jordan Rd. Kowloon

Note the English made buses and cars (Ford Consul) in use at that time.

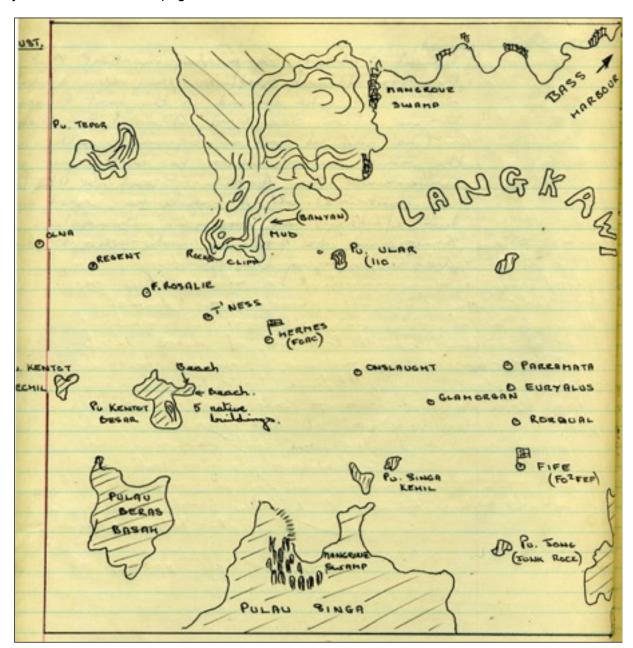


Chart of fleet at anchor Langkawi

1500hrs; a load of us left the ship wearing 'civvies' in the Pinnace and set off toward the mud-beach to have a Banyan (a matelots picnic on tropical islands)

When we neared the beach Jim tried to get in front of me, by climbing onto the 'gunwale' so I took his arm and toppled him with the help of someone else. I went in second and then everybody was in; jeans, shirts and towels sodden.

The women were 'locked' away (obviously-- JACK comes here often) and the men could not speak English. We were told before leaving the ship:

- 1) "Do not pick bananas" (so we picked them; they were unripe and left our hands with brown stains; similar to those you get from dandelions).
- 2) "Do not cut down coconuts" (we found where the natives stored them and took one between four of us and opened it up with a stone).
- 3) "Do not swim farther than a few feet from the beach because of the sharks, sea-snakes and crocodiles" Mick, Jim and I swam out a considerable distance; till we nearly reached Pulau Ular, but turned around as

the tide was changing direction (outward) and we did not want to miss the last boat back to the ship.

considerable distance: In the journal I wrote 'about half a mile'

4) next page.

4) "Do not leave the beach", so we climbed the hill to have a look at the surrounding islands and also to see the temples which are built all over the hill-sides.



Drawing of a native temple





When storms hit the island the natives run to these temples of wood to pray. Inside one we found a couple of bricks and an enamelled basin and a plate of rice.

It was under one of these 'shacks' that we found a pile of ripe coconuts still in their kernels.

Unripened bananas taste (feel on the tongue) very similar to cotton-wool 'cepting that they are very bitter tasting.

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There was one or two things that proved the island was not altogether isolated (ie. western cigarettes and bottled shrimps lying around, close to the path. On the path we found Hermit crabs everywhere and redants about half an inch long. We saw tropical butterflies around the island too; a lot bigger than those in the UK.

A few yards out from the beach the sea-bed changed from sand to coral and a bit further out the coral was covered with a sticky grey mud that got deeper. Eventually we were out of our depth and didn't bother to try to find the sea-bed. Even with goggles the salt was too much to be able to see anything below the surface.

All in all it was a 'Bezzie' afternoon.

Looking back the reference to a half mile distance to ULAR did seem excessive but then we did make a good effort to reach it and we did feel indestructible in those days. A look at a chart would confirm the distance. The reference to sharks etc. was real enough too.

I was wearing plimsolls; Jim wasn't and the sea-bed was coral which cut his feet putting fresh blood into the water. I gave him one of my plimsolls so we could each put a foot down safely in the shallow waters.

I recall natives arriving at the beach with bottled beer. We had no money on us and we tried in vain to try to trade Pusser's Limers; (Lime flavoured crystals with added water) for the beer.

Amongst the coconut palm grove we found a fresh-water well, complete with bucket to draw up water. I have a photo of me drinking from the bucket.

See page 173 an official photo taken of Fairey Gannet AEW3 # 61 given a 'Cold-launch'; taking-off by steam catapult whilst the ship is at anchor, at Langkawi. The fast jets need wind over the deck to provide the necessary lift to take-off.

Monday 26-08-68 and Tuesday 27-08-68 page 108

Continuation of exercises, building up toward the Official Readiness Inspection (ORI)

Wednesday 28-08-68

O.R.I. - the inspection by Admiral Fell to decide whether or not we and the ship are ready for war or any other confrontation we may meet between now and the completion of the commission.

During the day we 'punched aircraft out of the sky and knocked them out on the ground; we discovered and rendered U/S enemy ships (posed for by the RFA's). We even sank a submarine and a gun-boat. Playing war games, the I/C's are shit-hot kiddies. I hope they are able to do as well if it comes to the 'real thing' (Needless to say we won the war!) and so we passed the ORI.

It was cut-short as a ship's Cook was having an appendix operation and all light and electrical circuits had to be undisturbed; and during the exercises, power was being switched off and on regularly.

We were up in the Armoury until 2200hrs and I was so bored with it I crawled under the bench and 'crashed-out'.

Thursday 29-08-68

still page 108

On passage to Singapore

PS: the added scribble is not by my hand KEET! a love heart with arrow and the name Wendy inserted

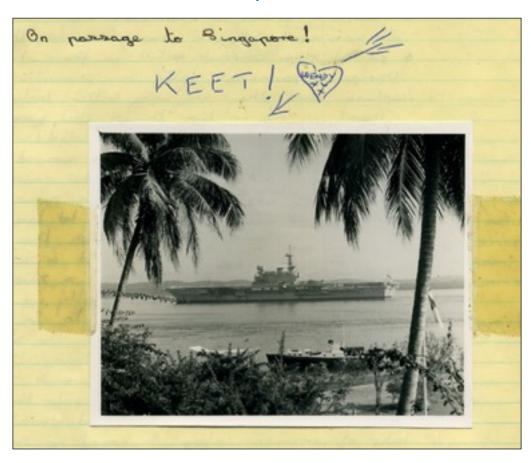
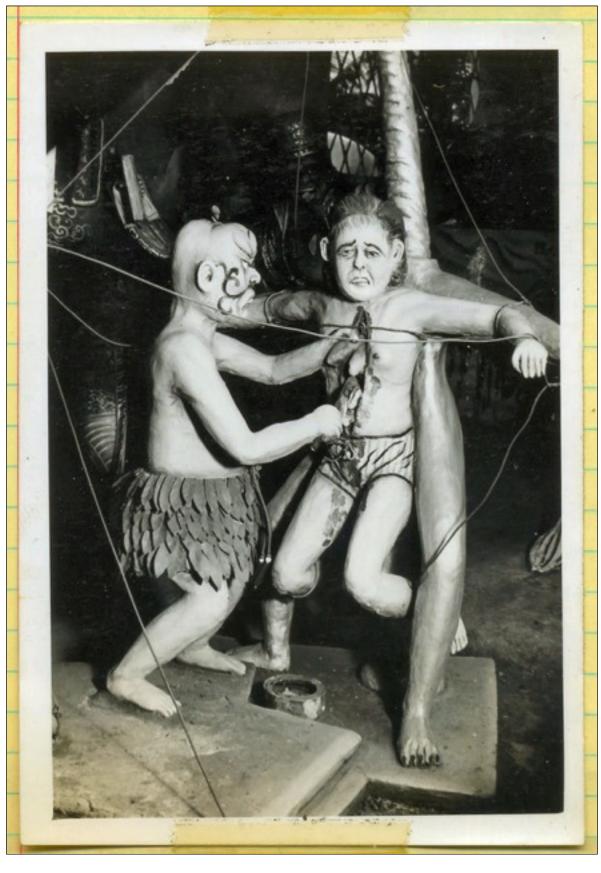


Photo of *HMS Hermes* in the Straits Singa's and Johore Bahru

We hit Singapore



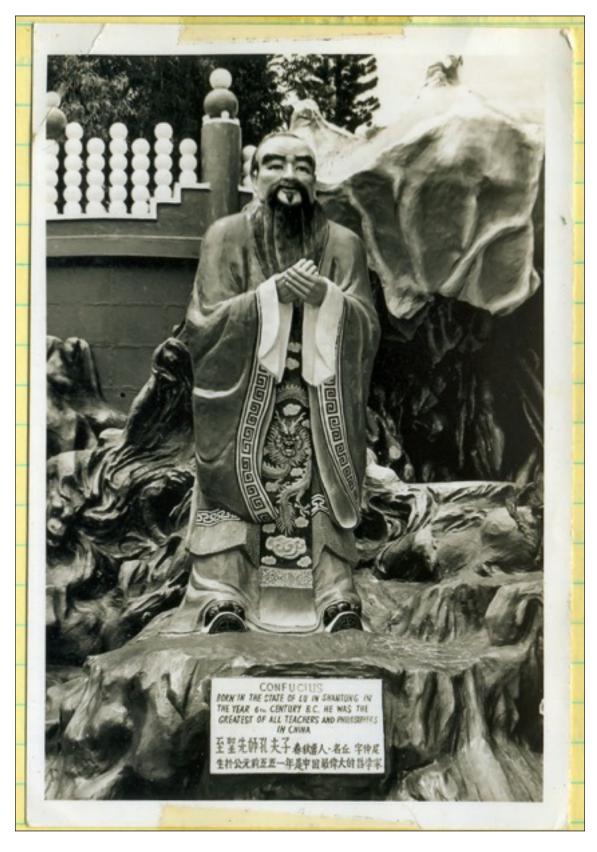
Photo: Entrance to Tiger Balm Gardens



Torture scene woman having her lungs removed (Tiger Balm Gardens)



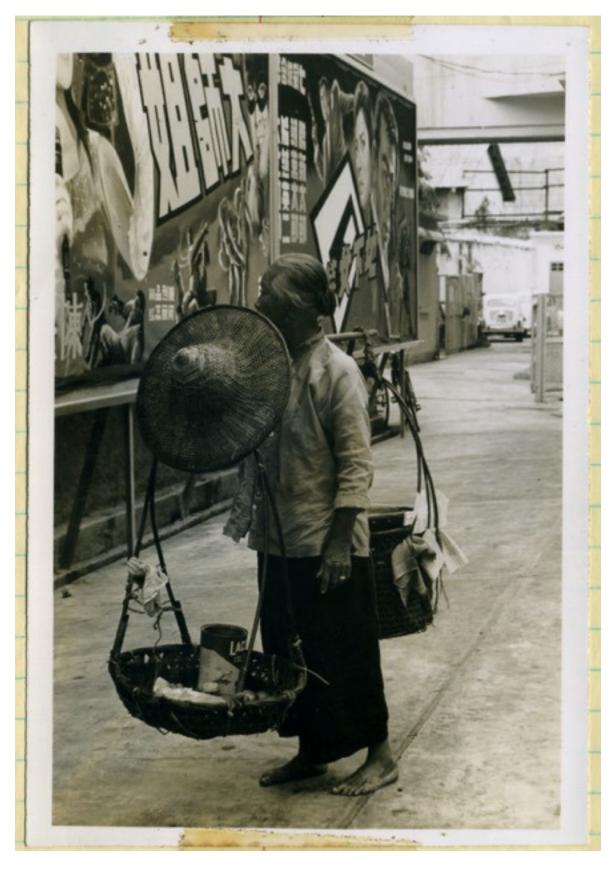
Ruang Thai (Tiger Balm Gardens)



Confucious (Tiger Balm Gardens)

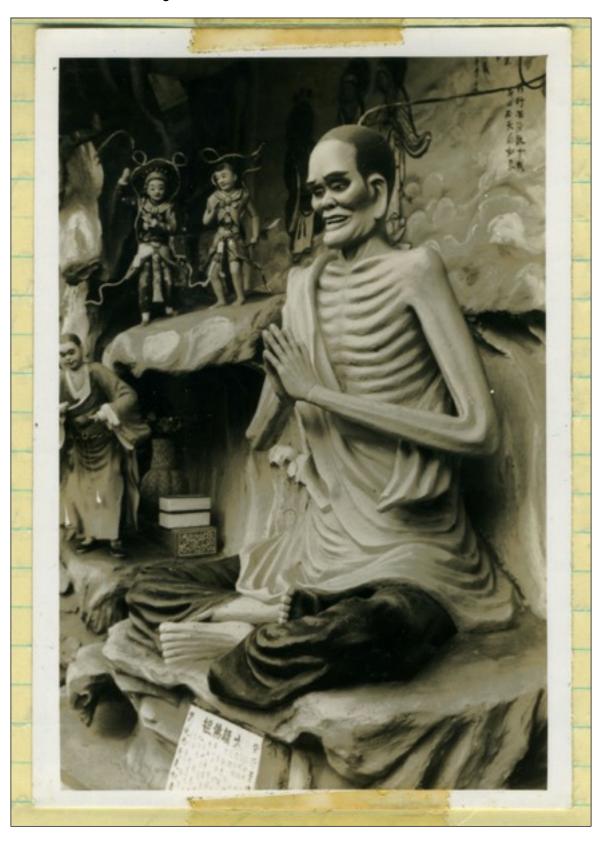


Young woman feeding her Mother-in-law (Tiger Balm Gardens)



Chinese peasant, Singapore

Page 111



Luk Tso (Tiger Balm Gardens)



Laughing Buddha in (Tiger Balm Gardens)



Sembawang is on the northern part of the island. This was the site of the Naval Dockyard. Close by was HMS Terror the land base accommodation for ships crews during re-fits. Within the grounds of the area was the Royal Sailors Rest (Aggie Weston's). Directly south lay, Nee Soon (later re-named Yishun) which was a popular watering hole. At the southern end is the location of Singapore City; a place which was of enormous importance for personal development, entertainment and life, for a young sailor aspiring to drink deeply of 'life's cup'.

The Singapore Naval Base was a cornerstone of British Defence policy in the Far East between the World Wars.

Originally announced in 1923, the construction of the base proceeded slowly until the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. It was completed in 1939 at a staggering cost of £60 million — (equivalent to £2½ billion in 2006.) It boasted:

- i. The dock covered 21 square miles (54 km2) and had what was then the largest dry dock in the world.
- ii. The third-largest floating dock in the world.
- iii. Enough fuel tanks to support the entire British Navy for six months.

In 1967 the British government had committed to withdrawal of its standing armed forces 'East of Suez'. Prior to this time a large contingent of ships were constantly operating and re-fitting in the huge naval base here. Ships and their crews could commonly be sent out to the Far-East for an unbroken tour of 2 years or longer.



Main Gate to Sembawang Dockyard c 1968 (left of gate is the Police Station)

Hundreds and maybe thousands of civilian workers poured through this gate each morning to carry out the re-fitting and repair of the fleet.

I recall a very badly limping Chinese of whom I asked, why he did not take a rest from work and his telling reply "I no come work, I no have job come back to".

On another occasion watching a Chinese electrician trying to test the condition of a fuse panel; he licked the tips of his fore and middle fingers, then ran his fingers, one down each side of the fuses. Out of a bank of twenty fuses he very quickly and painfully identified which fuse had blown. Still makes me smile and wince to picture him at his work.

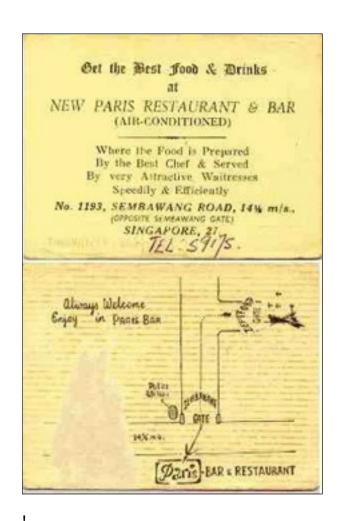
The first night in and those of us granted shore-leave streamed out of Sembawang Gate on foot to sample the experience that the Orient had to offer us. I went ashore with Hank who was familiar with the place. (Hank had just been out here on the 'Vic' (HMS Victorious) and returned on the 'Happy-H' in the hope of visiting his family who had emigrated to Australia a couple of years earlier).

We went into one of the nearest bars and I had my first glass of ice-cold Tiger Beer (not the warm tinned stuff given to us aboard). It was so cold that it seemed my throat was seared as it went down. The bars; or most of them, were air-conditioned and we were immediately greeted by pretty Chinese girls who wished to join us, engage us in conversation, responded encouragingly and hoped to earn a wage by getting us to buy more drinks in the same bar. The girls did not drink alcohol but would get a small glass of cold tea for which we would pay a premium.

There was far too much to see to stay-put. We made our way along the strip where, outside every shop and bar, touts or proprietors endeavoured to entice us in to sample or purchase goods. The many shops selling goods smelled strongly of burning incense (I came to know these as Joss-sticks; Joss being a term to mean Fate or Luck). These burning sticks served another purpose in reducing the olfactory assault upon our nasal senses of the, sweet, sickly, decomposing, putrefying stench offered up from the water-filled ditch which ran along the village. It is only now 40+ years on I have learned that that ditch which I thought contained all the 'ills of the world' as well the occasional 'body' was and is in fact the River Sungei. The shops sold; cameras, Hi-Fi record-decks, recording equipment, binoculars. All these goods were about 30% of the price we expected to pay in the UK. This was tempting stuff indeed.



Oasis Bar, Sembawang Rd. (opposite dockyard gate)



Flyer from New Paris Bar, (Sembawang)

The day wore on and it was a feast on my young senses. The girls all seemed beautiful and eager to please. The atmosphere was heady and exiting and though I was only a Naval Air Mechanic (an Able

Rate), on one of the lowest pay-scales my money seemed capable of great purchase power. This was not to be a day for buying equipment. Laughter and music and the occasional sound of fireworks being let-off and more of the icy-cold beer dripping with condensation, fuelled the intensity of the pleasure of being alive. Like the progress in a modern computer game I was ready for the next level of play. We decided to take a taxi into Singapore. We wanted a taxi but were approached by a tout. "Hey good-evening John. You want a Fuck? You want a good girl fuck?" "No! I want a taxi" (and why did he think my name was John?). "OK, You want fuck my wife?" "No! I want a taxi" "OK I know, you want my daughter?" Reasoning was not working but I was in a wonderful mood and aggression was not on the agenda. He was not put off. "OK, OK, John I know, you want to fuck me?" That was about as much of my goodwill as I could manage and I turned and left him calling out any other sexual aberrations he could think of which might wet our appetite.

We made our way back on board

The very next day I was ashore again at lunch-time. The new routine called 'tropical routine' started at 07.30 with a relaxed routine in the workshop; a chance to exchange 'dits' about our experiences, tidy-up and secure at mid-day. I could not wait to exit the dockyard gate and re-enter the world of Sembawang Village. As I sat down in one of the bars and began to savour the first pint of the day of Tiger an ancient Chinese woman with a crooked back and a grin wider than the face holding it, waddled up to our table. With a expression of gargoylic delight she addressed me, "Hello Keet". Shocked into silence I adopted discretion and left her to speak next. (In her dialect she had pronounced my name and I felt a concern that distinctly spoiled my reverie). My face must have shown my feelings and she went as if to re-assure me. "Keet last night you tell me you love me and take me back to England". I was only eighteen years old, I was naive and I was drunk the previous night, but I knew then as I know now, that whatever may have transpired in the last 12hrs I had not taken leave of my senses. Hank was beside himself at the pleasure he was deriving from my discomfort; he knew something, or was responsible for setting me up for this charade. I was not about to be compromising or diplomatic with this 'harpy' and was having nothing to do with her. The girls who worked in the many bars on the street ranged from quite attractive to really beautiful and my brain could not even understand how this old lady could even be here in the bar. I got up to leave and finishing my pint went to walk out, she called out after me, "You butterfly boy" and I could have only been thinking "Yeah whatever". Hank was still in raptures over the incident whilst I was indignant.

Next bar and lovely girls and I soon left the joke behind me. In one bar we visited, a pop group of four Chinese fellows sang loudly and with great enthusiasm a rendition of an Elvis Presley song; utterly destroying anything the 'King' had promoted. "Yu en no'tin ba a houn-dhog cryin alla time".



Aggie Weston's swimming pool (Sembawang)



Aggie Weston's (Sembawang)



Aggie Weston's (Sembawang)



Aggie Weston's (Sembawang)



HMS Terror in the background



Accommodation block HMS Terror



Typical example of Junior Rate accommodation HMS Terror



Accommodation HMS Terror

Singapore City was high on the agenda for an early visit and so, following an evening in the bars in Sembawang village drinking Tiger beer, I was into a taxi and on my way. I wanted to try the delights of an uncomplicated night of sexual gratification with one of the thousands of Chinese girls who plied their trade there. It was a little before midnight and I let the taxi driver take me to a venue (I guess he stood to get a small commission or else take me to a family relative who was 'in the trade'). I was let into a two storey building where the family were sitting up having a meal. I was introduced to the girl who was older than me, in her mid- twenties. We did not talk of money and I had no intention to start negotiating prices as I had become very focussed on a momentous occasion. The family and the girl exchanged some chatter in Chinese and I was led up stairs to a room immediately above the family group. The room was not decorated. The floorboards were bare and had holes in it through which the family room could be seen. The double bed; a hard unyielding piece of utility furniture had a simple cover on it and I do not recall any other furniture in the room. I was told I could have the whole night with the girl for \$10 (Singapore dollars: 2/9d to the dollar exchange rate meant about £1.50 or 30 bob as I would have referred to 30/- then). That was what I had intended and agreed to.

I passed over the cash to her and we stripped out of our clothes. The girl offered to hang my trousers up by the window with my money in the pockets. I was suspicious of her intentions and insisted on folding my trousers myself, into a small bundle and placed them under the pillow where I could keep them under my control. We then both set to work and as hard as we did; other than the pleasure of the accomplishment of the act, nothing happened and I knew enough to know that an intense, consuming wave of exquisite pleasure should be the culmination of her and my endeavours. I was only 18 years old and as fit as a proverbial butcher's dog and not about to give up. We changed positions and I learned what it meant when the older sailors had said to me that Chinese women's go sideways not vertically. They move their hips side to side in rhythm with our fore and aft motion. The night wore on and I just worked harder and harder as the whole event became a personal challenge. She interrupted the act to climb off the bed and producing a chamber pot of fresh water proceeded to squat over it and scoop up handfuls of water with which to rinse and cool herself. She asked if I would like to have a sleep but that was never part of the plan and so we mounted the bed and each other and went, north, east, south and west around the bed. This continued until just before 6-o clock in the morning when she asked me to stop.

"You got a no-come dick"..... "I think it time... you go back...... your ship now".

She was quite correct; I did have to get back and needed a taxi. I dressed, thanked her and departed.

Back on board I went down to the showers where I discovered a considerable tenderness and a disconcerting redness all about my pubic area. I immediately thought I had contracted one of the various venereal diseases. I had not used a condom (freely issued from the sick-bay) and besides I don't think that those prophylactics were designed to work for six hours. At stand-easy when we would stop for a cup of tea or go off the ship onto the jetty to buy chilled milk, I excused myself claiming to be hot and sweaty and went down the showers to wash off again and to self-determine the damage I may have done. I still had this expansive red skin and general tenderness. Getting paranoid now and at lunch time I went once more to have a shower and a look at myself. Certain I had contracted VD ("caught the boat-up" was the phrase we used) I made an appointment at the Sick-Bay and to my relief was told that my 6 hour marathon overnight in the city had resulted in me only getting severely bruised around the pubic bone and that no treatment was necessary. I did realise that whilst in the arms of my first Chinese girl as well as my virginity I had lost my St Christopher and chain.

Whatever else the immediate future held for me; I could not and would not now, die a virgin.

1966 the author, Leslie Thomas had written the acclaimed comic novel, The Virgin Soldiers. The book was inspired by Thomas' own experiences when doing National Service in Singapore in the 1950's. The gist of the book is a group of teenage soldiers who had a fear of dying during the Malayan Emergency without ever losing their virginity.

Oriental Bar

The, Oriental Bar, located down a side street, close to the Brit Club, in the city became a regular first stop in Singapore. It had a number of bar girls, one of whom, Pauline had developed a bond with Hank on his previous trip to the Far-East. I struck-up a friendship with Wendy, which continued for the duration of my time in the Far-East. Wendy was her bar name. Her given name was Susan and though sexual relationships were so commonplace she and I never pursued that side of the relationship. She was as like to buy drinks for me (unheard of among working bar girls) as I was for her.

Bhugis Street

At night time in 1968 this street became the heart of Singapore. The street was set out with tables and chairs where you could sit and drink and eat. You could be entertained or become part of the entertainment. The place was self policed by the Kai-Tai; the trans-sexual, she-men who operated there. One evening whilst I sitting there enjoying ice-cold Tiger beer and a plate of 'crab and asparagus' taking in the ambience when an American female tourist caused a disturbance by declaring, very vocally, her disgust at discovering these painted, provocative women all around her were in fact, men! The next thing I saw was the woman, pinned against a wall by a Kai-Tai who had removed a high-heeled shoe and was holding it above his head threatening to use the stiletto. The woman's male companions had wisely adopted a conciliatory stance and succeeded in calming the situation. Moments later the street was back to its usual decadent self.

Cut-throat razor shaves ashore

Another experience in Sembawang village was to visit a barbers-shop. After leaving home at the tender age of 15 years I was to learn that shaving was compulsory in the RN and though I was still to develop facial hair or even pubic hair for quite some time, I and all my mess-mates went through a charade of scraping our face under supervision every morning. (I used to remove the blade surreptitiously and pull the soap off my face with a non-razor). Later as the need arose I had the use of a battery operated shaver and once shaving became necessary I bought and used a Gillette Techmatic which held a strip of blade in a cassette and could be wound-on; five times, to replace the used portion of blade. None of the above activity prepared me for Sembawang.

Entering the barber shop I was greeted by delightful looking girls one of whom showed me to the chair and sat me down. Having wrapped my face in a very hot damp towel she prepared the soap water and produced a cut-throat razor such I had not last seen since watching my granddad in the 1950's. She wore a very short skirt and climbed onto my lap to sit astride, facing me. The whole process of sitting across me with her skirt up nearly to her waist, soaping and then scraping my face with a cut throat razor had something of a heady, exotic, sexy nature. My face felt smoother than I ever achieved. I paid and left feeling good. Now looking back I would describe it as being pampered. Funnily enough I never returned to repeat the pleasure.

Tickets for a dance in Johore Bahru

Across the causeway from Singapore Island stood the mainland of the Malayan Peninsular; beginning with the state of Johore Bahru, known to us as simply "JB". One day we went over there to have a look. Walking along and around the streets, taking in the sights, smell, and sounds we got the feel this place was the poor relation of Singapore. On the evening we made our way to a hotel advertising a dance. We arrived and bought a glass of beer to drink whilst we took in the ambience of the place and to 'check-out' the girls. Then deciding to dance and choosing the girls to ask for a dance with we made our way across the floor and politely asked them for the next dance. We were ignorant of the format and felt a little foolish when the girls asked for our tickets explaining in the broken English, "You no got ticket; you no dance. We made a tactical withdrawal and agreed that paying the girls to dance with us was not going to get us anywhere. We left.

Egg banjo's in Nee-Soon at 2-3 am

One night after a long evening in Singapore City we were making our way back, to the ship, by taxi when hunger got the better of us. We asked the taxi-driver if we could get some food. Without turning off the main road, a moment later, we found ourselves in Nee-Soon village, where the driver stopped and called out. The response was immediate and surprised us. We were alongside a street stall where the vendor, who was still in attendance, woke up and instantly lit his stove to heat his Wok. In a couple minutes we were eating fried eggs served-up in a long bread roll. This was known to us as an egg-banjo; so named because of the funny result of eating one carelessly. Biting into the egg roll usually caused the egg-yolk to run free from the roll and run down the front of the diner's stomach [shirt or jacket] and holding the long roll upward in the left-hand whilst attempting to brush-off the congealing egg-yolk resembled someone playing a banjo.

Nee-Soon was famed in local lore for its Nee-Soon virgins; a group of women in their 50's or 60's still plying their trade on the streets. To the tune of "Fly me to the moon and let me play among the stars" by Frank Sinatra we used to sing, "Fly me to Nee-Soon and let me play among the whores".

That a street trader would stay/sleep by his stall overnight in the hope a bit of extra trade demonstrated the financial need to succeed and the work ethic of the Chinese people.

The 3 storey hotel

One night out in Singa's I became separated from my mates and decided to sample the flesh-pot delights again. I found myself outside a prospective place and entered. Cutting to the chase I asked out rightly what was on offer. The Mama San said the house had three floors with cheapest girls on the ground-floor and dearer girls upstairs on the next floor and even dearer so, on the third floor. I was full of ambition and told her very confidently that I would start on the ground-floor and work my way up as the mood took me. I was taken to a pretty girl 'on the ground floor' After some time of fun I explained that I wanted to try something different and got her to sit across my lap, facing me whilst I sat on the edge of the bed. We then wriggled about until she had her legs over my shoulders and we engaged. I thought I was being a real stud and slowly and carefully rose off the bed whilst supporting her. So far so good; I walked her till she had her back to the wall and we set about getting what I had come for. Unfortunately as my enthusiasm increased and we became more vigorous in this exotic position I found myself becoming unstable. As if in slow motion I felt us move, very slightly, from the wall and then unwilling to disengage from what was an intensely enjoyable event discovered we were going over top- dead-centre and unable to stop what I knew had to happen next. We tumbled back onto the floor [I was enough of a gentleman to let my body take the brunt of the fall so she landed on top of me. I don't know when we disengaged but it didn't matter; I was taken by the ridiculous and comic way we must have looked as we tried and failed in this gymnastic exercise and broke out into an uncontrolled laughter. As she began to join in the laughter my mood changed from what I had intended when I was first told of the three floors of sexual fun. I decided I had had enough fun for one evening and thanked her and the Mama San and left. It still makes me laugh to myself to recall the event.

Taxi racing on Thompson Rd

We could hail a taxi in Sembawang and travel to Singa's for just \$2.00 if we wanted exclusive use of the cab. But one night at Hank's suggestion we hailed two cab drivers to take us to Singapore City with an agreement that the driver of the taxi to get there first would win [earn] another \$5. They were up for it and we raced away to the city. I don't recall who won but the ride was much more exciting in those Mercedes Benz, than on any other trip in. Today Singapore is hidebound with an array of rules affecting social behaviour including chewing gum or spitting in public and I imagine taxis racing along the main road would produce a howl of action by the police.

Pick-Up taxi [sharing]

The same journey could be made for just \$1.00 the price was off-set by the arrangement for the driver to pick- and drop-off as many people as he could en-route. As a result of saving money one day I did the pick-up taxi run and along the way a Chinese woman climbed in to sit next to me with a hen on her lap. Other locals climbed in and climbed out as we went on our way; normal for them but I guess I must have seemed the odd one out; why would a visiting sailor with money in his pocket choose to travel in such a manner?.....Answer.... because I could and I was still drinking in life experiences.

Fireworks in the bar.

Chinese fireworks and crackers in particular were much more energetic than the 1d. and 3d. Bangers we could purchase back home about the time of Bonfire night.

My work was with explosive devices and bombs and rockets. For whatever reason I never attempted to purchase any fireworks but do remember a couple of anecdotal events. Once walking along the bar fronts in Sembawang I saw a bloke [got to have been a matelot] stroll up to the entrance of a bar with a lit cracker and lob it through the door. The bang was substantial and as he fled away laughing he was chased by Chinese bar staff. He was not caught and the event was regarded as high spirits.

Bhugis Street: "This old hat of mine"

At the end of the street was a urinal block and the roof of this facility was very popular platform amongst drunken sailors for one of their party to climb onto and perform an age old opera; which starts-off with him singing "This old hat of mine has seen some stormy weather"

"This old hat of mine has seen some stormy weather"

And at this point he would discard his hat and even if no hat was worn the song always started the same way.

"This old shirt of mine has seen some stormy weather"

All his clothing got a mention and was all sung through, till standing naked on the roof-top his mates and anyone else who cared; to throw away their beer, would sling their beer up to soak the hapless sailor who was left to pick-up his discarded clothing.

The entertainment could continue with the "Dance of the flaming arseholes" whereby a matelot who has stripped-off his clothing would grip a roll of paper between the cheeks of his backside which was subsequently ignited and so would commence a solo dance that ended when the flames were extinguished; usually after he got his bum singed. Extinguished as in the previous performance; by having beer slung over him.



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Playing and getting fleeced at OXO in Bhugis St

Another form of income was earned on the street by young children. Using a magic slate [write with a stylus on the plastic cover to produce marks and lift the plastic cover to restore the slate to blank]. The children worked the tables playing OXO [Noughts and Crosses] with customers, for a wager and they most nearly always won. One evening I played and expectedly lost, but ungraciously handed the boy an English Thru'ppeny-bit telling him it was worth more than the few cents wagered for. I have no doubt the enterprising lad would have profited with it.

Oxidised chocolate from the NAAFI:

Whilst in the Far East with its hot humid climate, something happened to the bars of chocolate sold to us by the NAAFI. We discovered on opening the wrapper that the chocolate had developed a powdery white surface. We were suckers and accepted the reason; that it was a natural process called oxidation and therefore the price was not reduced.

Re-constituted milk:

A treat specific to our stay in Sembawang was the daily arrival on the dock-side of the man on a bike; modified with a box to carry his wares. He produced vanilla flavoured milk made from powdered milk which was sold, very cold in a clear plastic bag. It doesn't sound like a treat now but the ice-cold drink went down well with us.

Books that I read:

I immersed myself in the change of culture that the Far-East brought to me. And one way was to read the work of others.

I had read the book titled The Arrow War which describes the time of British Empire /expansionism and blatant exploiting. A time when the British exported Opium to feed an encouraged, growing market of addiction by Chinese. When the authorities tried to stop it the British took umbrage and sent gun boats to threaten the populace. The term Gun-boat Diplomacy may have its origins somewhere out there/then.

James Clavell wrote a series of oriental novels; the Tai-pan series, which described the growth of a trading dynasty centred on Hong-Kong. He also wrote King Rat; a POW survival story in a Japanese prison.

Two books which addressed the life of prostitution were: The World of Suzie-Wong, by Richard Mason and The Red Sailor, by Patrick O'Hara.

Another book I read was then used to make a movie of the same title, The Sand Pebbles, starring Steve McQueen.

Monday 16-09-68

page 112

CAA(O) Bob Fyles from Lee (on Solent) has taken over from "Nic" till April.

BACK TO SEA. WE LEFT No 13 WHARF 08.15hrs this morning. I got collared for an 'Ammo RAS'.and went down the magazines to stow weapons. I finished black as the lad I was working with (one of the few black ratings aboard) and covered in sweat.

Yesterday I went up the Sick-Bay and asked to have a test to see if I was 'clean' or not and was told to report there in the morning for a urine test. Having not been to the 'heads' since 22.00 I managed to hold on till then. I then joined one queue (for new cases) and when I got to the front was sent to join the queue to see the 'Doc'. Still 'crimping' I reached the front and was sent to join the treatment queue (still crimping). I reached the front, was told that the test would prove nothing and was told to come back later. I leapt down to the 'heads' as fast as God would let me (and that was fast) to relieve myself. I've decided not to bother going back, though a blood test in a few weeks time when the 'Syph mechanics' aren't so busy, might be a good thing (rather be safe than sorry-later).

Tuesday 17-09-68 Wednesday 18-09-68 Thursday 19-09-68

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Normal routine days; nothing spectacular.---- Except. Ben Casey (NAM(O)) has been taken off the ship and flown back to HMS Terror, because he threw a fit and hurled a can at a killick SA (Sick-berth Attendant), cutting his face. His going leaves an empty bunk in our 'caboose'. The NAAFI was selling its bottles of orange at 2/6d per bottle when we were off Langkawi but since leaving Singa's it's price has risen in steady increments to 3/11d per bottle. At that price I'm sticking to water from the cold-water machines, around the ship.

Friday 20-09-68 page 112

Sqdn's send all their gear in for servicing and Curtis with his knee length shorts and baggy shirts gives me the 'screaming every time he comes in the section and opens his mouth.

I took a mock GCE 'O'-level, General Paper, up the schoolroom. Moxon (*Lt schoolie*) will mark it and if I do at all well, I'll take the real exam in three weeks time.

Saturday 21-09-68

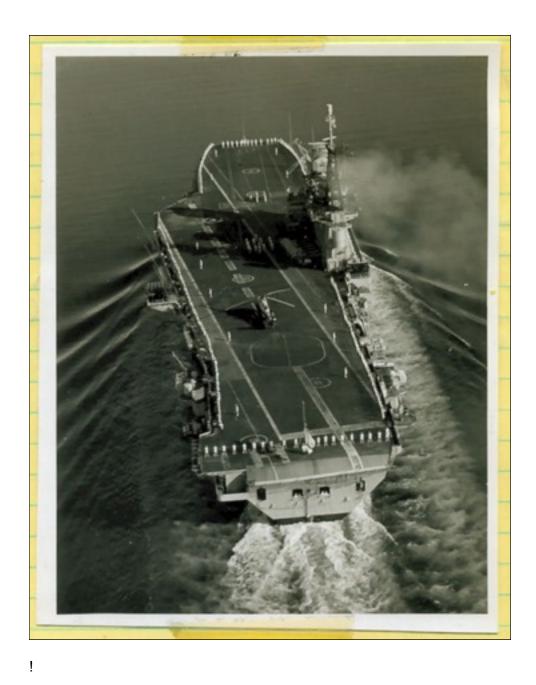
Last day for mail; on or off, for the next 8 days as the ship will be 'under-way to exercise areas off the Australian continent. "Very boring up the workshops now". It's a big anti-climax after Singa's runs ashore. I've a bet on with Mick (NAM (AE) Mick Rodgers) that he will receive a letter from Jean tonight. She'll cost me two cans of beer if she never wrote.

Sunday 22-09-68

Today coincided with the calendar in that we had a Sunday this week. We don't often get them but as we are 'on-passage' from last night, today's flying was cancelled and we got the day off.

Almost everyone got their head-down from secure until 17.00 getting up only for lunch. It was pretty cloudy today (not too hot) so Mick and myself went for a few laps around the deck. After: dinner, a 'wet' of 'tot' and running through funnel-smoke though, we were jiggered after only 10 circuits (600ft deck= 1200ft+ per lap x 10 laps = 12,000ft; in excess of two miles).

Listened to the Store's Bashers pop group on the weather-deck for sometime. If they were to get a new singer who didn't have to sing through an echo-chamber; to produce some tone, it would help.



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Most important Aircraft on board



Photo of the COD Gannet

Our Unreliable COD...... Landing on; Stroboscoping

Very easy day; spent most of my time on PPE Notes. Paddy McMullen showed us he could drink hydraulic fluid (for kicks). He'd drink anything for a bet or a dare. "Everyone to their own taste" I suppose (Yech!).

Additional note from Mick

Tuesday 24-09-68

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No entry

Wednesday 25-09-68

page 115

Quiet days (Don't go to sleep till 24.00 (no such time in the Navy 23.59 and 00.01). Rumour mongers once agreed that if you struck someone exactly at mid-night you could not be officially charged with and offence as technically the time did not exist.

Thursday 26-09-68

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NAAFI haircut. Wrote a 'Dear John' to M.

Friday 27-09-68

page 115

Bought a Seiko watch from the NAAFI on HP £16.6.6

Saturday 28-09-68

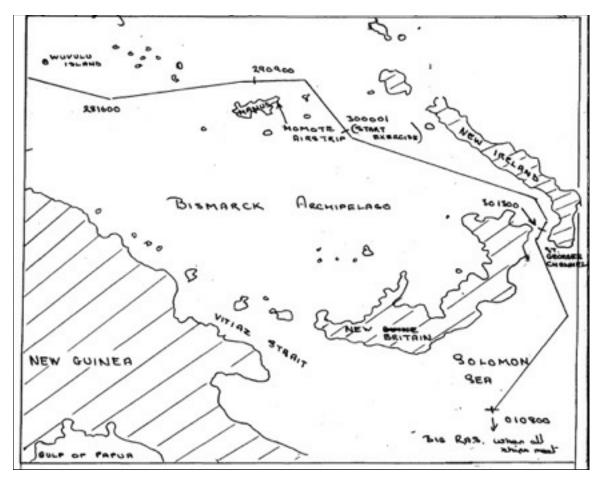
page 115

Was supposed to have had my photo taken (again) for the local papers back home; this time in 'whites', in a group, on the flight-deck. It all fell through though as flying was continuous until 17.00

Crash on deck today. (Amazing that such an event passed with such a throw away comment).

Sunday 29-09-68

page 115



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Drawing of sea chart 'Bismarck Archipelago

Worked long hours today – didn't knock-off till 11.00.

Went up on the F/D for a spot of 'bronzy-bronzy' and got roped into a game of deck-hockey.

There was a beautiful sunset, seen from the boat-deck this evening. "I must buy a colour film to use on the setting sun.

We start on our operational exercises tonight from 23.59 till God knows when!

This morning at 08.00 we were 25 miles off Manus; on which lays, Momote Airfield from where we collected 7 bags of mail for us.

This morning, up the section I was wrongly blamed for some 'greenie' work; Mick Culkin wouldn't give me a chance to explain so I started using my 'O' on my arm and refused to touch any electrical equipment. I was in my rights and so I succeeded in causing a bit of 'nause'.

Before Ordnance Electrical Mechanics (OEM's) were introduced to the Air Arm, armourers used to service 'L' work but could not sign for it. Their inclusion simply means that the 'new' bombheads can sign for the work. With two types of armourers there is demarcation in trades and that is what I was using, to stick to pure 'O' work.

Culkin told me I could make out a request to join the G. Party!! [Gunners Party].

Eventually he decided to give me a make and mend for 'causing nausea among the hands'.

I managed to get my head-down for four hours then went up on deck for an hour's bronzy-bronzy on the boat-deck.

As usual with these exercises we are the 'goodies' and don't get sunk.

This morning Lt Penfold was given a paper exercise involving 4x1000lb bombs to be put on an aircraft. Then followed an exchange between Lt Penfold and CAA(O) Bob Fyles on the side-lift.

Penfold, "Imagine the bombs are on the lift and the lift is rising"

Bob Fyles, "What are we going to do with them?"

Penfold. "Fit them to an aircraft".

BF, Where's the aircraft?"

P, "Imagine that's on the lift too, imagine it's over there".

BF, "Well can't we 'imagine' the bombs are already fitted to the aircraft?"

Penfold sent the CAA(O) back down the workshop because he wouldn't 'Play the Game'.

OEM: The reason I ended up as a Bombhead instead of a Grubber (Airframe and Engine) following completion of; Part One training at HMS Ganges was because the electrical aspect of aircraft was described to the class after our final exam results were given out. I had done well in my exams and was given first choice. It sounded interesting and I made my choice. The other mechanic with whom I had vied for top placement throughout the year long course, a certain Chris Wright also chose Armourer. There were six places in all and the next three best placed mechanics made the same choice. That left one place to fill and there were no more takers. The instructor POAF(AE) Bill Bailey asked who came last in the exams; and the last place was filled. (I felt a certain sense of apprehension on that particular selection..... Hadn't I and the others just 'won' a select place on an electrical training course?)

Gunners Party: This was the other employment for Bombheads on board. Gunners Party or Weapon Supply as they are now called looked after the air weapon magazines and prepared and delivered weapons to the squadrons.

Make and Mend: A feature of naval life when time from 'place of work' was granted to effect repair to a ratings clothing. Today it was a gratis thing of time-off in lieu which could be granted by section leaders.

Tuesday 01-10-68

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Was 'Heads' sweeper today but because of the RAS, ended up in the mess. AED Reg (the Air Engineering Dept. Regulating PO/CPO) phoned me up to say "there was no reason for the 'heads' to be locked and would I clean them up". I had by that time cleaned-up the mess and would have been 'seen-off' to clean both so I went up to his office while he was out; wrote out a chit; "Heads closed as drainage pipes were being stripped and as they were out of use they could not be cleaned", signed it and left it on his desk. (I got my head-down this afternoon.)

Wednesday 02-10-68

page 117

Got a letter from RNB Education Office, with my GCE results: ENGLISH, Grade 7 (HET pass), MATHS, Grade 2 (GCE).

A Dept/unit in the Engineering World has taken in salt-water and passed it through; contaminating, yards and yards of piping. The source must be found and all piping leading to and from the boiler, 'dryed-out; this can be a six week job (possibly an early entry to Sydney)

Lost 10/- during a card game of Bridge tonight (no comment)!!

The 'heads' have been re-opened.



Drawing of chart N-E coast line of Australia

Was rated up to NAM (O) 1st Class today by the Commander in the; Main-switch change-over-room. He thought my 5 months advancement was good and told my DO I could be given a further 1 month, if he wished, so I now have 6 months back-pay to hit Aussie with.

Aussie LOA 6/6 per day x 30 days $30.25p \times 30 = £9.075$ (Local Overseas Allowance)

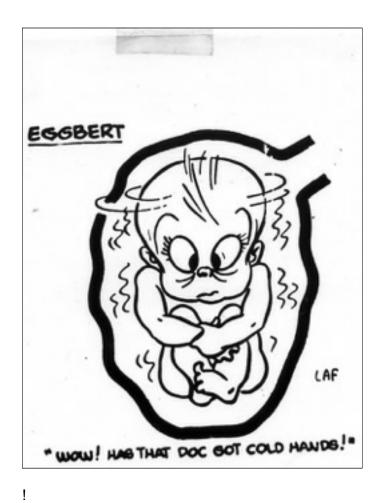
RA 12/6 per day x 10 days $60.25p \times 10 = £6.025$ (Relatives Ashore)

Total = £15.10+ My wage. Approx' = £35.00 (don't know how many weeks)

The Aussie railway are granting us rail-warrants (FOUL-BUZZ)

The plan was to take a period of leave and visit relatives of Hank, originally from Nottingham, who were now resident in Adelaide; a 24 hour rail journey from Sydney. This made me qualify for RA allowance

I think (but not sure) I earned about £4.00 per week and must have calculated wages at sea (four weeks wages earned since leaving, Singa's, plus 6 months back-pay of the difference between NAM 2nd class to NAM 1st class)



Friday 04-10-68

page 119

Was Duty Armourer last night and had to be up again at 0400 this morning for Flying Stations so this afternoon I was given a 'make and bend' (not a typo). Head down! Zzzzzzzzz.

I see the Russians are with us again – at a distance.

Saturday 05-10-68

page 119

7 bags of mail came aboard today; but they turned out to all be OFFICIAL MAIL. Someone slipped-up (Durhhh!). We are as close to the east coast of Queensland, now as we shall ever be during this month or this 'commish'.

The whole of this coast is; from Rockhampton northwards, equatorial & tropical forest & backed by the mountain range – Great Dividing Range.

Daily Orders make it clear that I am eligible for redundancy by request and compulsory discharge.

Such an announcement was of massive influence upon my outlook for my future.

Sunday 05-10-68

page 119

No mail again. The COD Gannet went U/S whilst ashore.

Had a request (musical) played for me from Jean, Ron & kids at home: Mary Hopkins.

I went up on the F/D, late evening. The Alaskan Highway was a mass of R.P.'s and Bombs for tomorrow's part of Operation Coral Sands when we knock the hell out of Townsend Island in Shoalwater Bay. At the same time the assault craft will beach and fly-off landing parties; two on the mainland and one on the island.

Alaskan Highway: the strip of flight deck, outboard of the island superstructure, often used to prepare and temporarily stow weapons ready for issuing to a Squadron.

Monday 05-10-68

page 119

John Arnold and myself, manned the section as 'workshop-backing-up party', whilst the rest are up on deck involved with the squadrons. I took a couple of batteries up this morning.

Tuesday 08-10-68

page 119

Ammunition RAS. Letter from Mary.

Wednesday 09-10-68

page 119

Definitely not going out in 1970; - roll-on "72"

See page 154 for confirmation.

Thursday 10-10-68

page 119

Took my exam; GCE O-level in General Paper this afternoon in the school-room and of course had the afternoon away from the section. I've got between now and 1972 to take what exams suit me for a job in Civvy St.

Friday 11-10-68

page 119

Duty Armourer today and so another quiet day.

Went down the Ship's Reg. Office to clear-up my leave expiry time on the 25th; an hour's difference could mean the difference of 15 days pay to me.

Outside the office a 'Chockhead' was sprawled, spread-eagled on the deck; 'paralytic' from drinking and RPO Zebedee was standing over him singing (sarcastically), "21 today, 21 today".

SYDNEY

Saturday 12-10-68 page 120

Sunday 13-10-68 Preparing civvies for runs ashore

Monday 14-10-68 page 120

A seven mile long column of ships; of 4 nations enter Sydney Harbour. We berth at Garden Island so that the port-side faces the famous Dorman Long built bridge. (I was very proud and vocal that the famous bridge was prepared on Tees-Side by the Middlesbrough steel-maker Dorman Long).

First day in I was given my leave-pass so, Hank and I went ashore and booked a train for 20.10 leaving for Melbourne. We went out on the town for a look around – and a couple of drinks.

At 20.40 (*late*) we turned up at Central Station – 'no train!' so we went back for another visit to the city, this time to King's Cross; Sydney's centre of expensive night-life. We kept clear of Chapel St. one of the city's sleazier Bro-tel areas. We fell asleep during a striptease show in the 'Pink Panther and paid a visit to the 'Bunny Club' which has no entrance fee.

Beer out here is chemical lager, drunk not in pints and half-pints, but in: SCHOONERS (15oz), MIDDIES (9oz), & PONIES (5oz) and is about the same price as in the UK.

(The evening moved along at a pace and we were approached by a very attractive red-haired girl who chatted us up and we responded in kind; I thought she was very pretty, Ha!. She invited us back to spend time with her friends at a cafe. 'She' paused to get our attention and announced she was in fact 'a boy' and did we still want to meet her/his friends. We were not going to get into any funny business and we needed somewhere to sit and have some non-alcoholic drink. We stayed a while and exchanged jokes to see who could shock the other. Hank told the joke about; the man who drank the contents of a bar-spittoon.

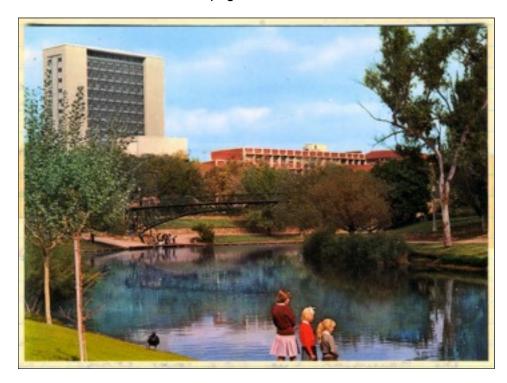
We slept in the station, had a wash and brush-up there and caught a 07.00 train on our first leg of the 24 hr journey out to Adelaide. The countryside is monotonous and for all the difference that occurred we could have been going round in circles. The carriages are kept spotlessly clean; no fruit may be taken over statelines, to prevent any contamination. Windows cannot be opened as they are double-glazed to prevent misting-up in this heat.

We arrived in Adelaide station at 10.00 on the 16th and caught a taxi out to Blyth St. Taxi's out here are not expensive, as the fares don't vary with the number of people sitting, so five in a cab can work out cheaper than transport by public transport.

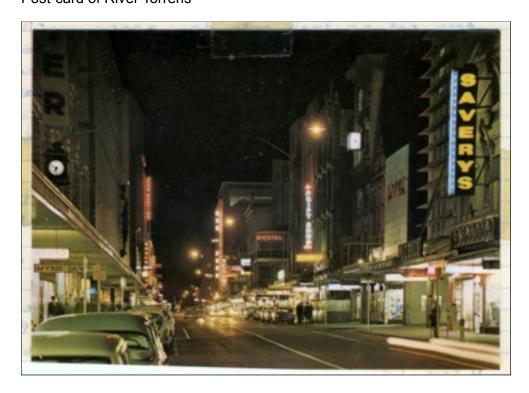
We were locked out until 17.00 so we called in at the Hotel Enfield – the local; just to try the ale which is a damn sight better than that sold on the east-coast.

We (Kathy and her friend Linda, Mrs Hancox and Ray) had nights out almost every night at; hotels, cabarets, night-clubs and a pub. We went to the city's zoo and went swimming to an indoor-pool one night. All in all I had one hell of a time with the family and was a bit 'chocker' about leaving. I got back to Sydney with half-a-mind to go back out there on the mornings train.

The food available on the train was simple (steak garnished with a little salad) and because there was not much I had the choice to eat-all or still feel hungry. It came with tomato which I had never eaten from a personal dislike. I ate them then and loved them. Weird thing is that as a kid I worked on a local farm with friends who used to commonly help themselves to fresh tomatoes from the glass-house. I had obviously missed out on a free treat all that time.



Post-card of River Torrens



Post-card of Arundel Street

Arundel St, Adelaide; where Kathy works at 'Coles Store' – got me a 'tie' in one of the stores down there. It's a decent one; needless to say I never chose it, she did.

This was once called Rundle St – in the days of horse-drawn buggies.

Friday 25-10-68

page 122

Early night.

Saturday 26-10-68

page 122

Went ashore with "Dickie" Bird and crossed over the river by passenger steamer (12 cents) to Toroga Park to take a look around the zoo; that is set up, on the sides of the embankment. The animals are too enclosed and the cages are badly arranged so we missed a 'fair bit' of it. King Kong, a gorilla bought by the zoo 9 years ago for A\$ 8000, died three days after our visit. Cause of death was something to do with living in this climate for so long.

I had intended going back on board, but didn't fancy a night on board so we went for a meal at a restaurant in LOFTUS St. (I stood in front of the sign and bowed-down). After that it was the bars for a few 'schooners' then on to the 'Hawaiian Eye' (\$2 cover-charge). The beer which I'd never heard of (West-End bitter) cost 46c for a small bottle so I ended up sipping at it like wine; half the time I was picking up the glass and putting it down again without touching it.

Met Kerry a WRAAC in there; she's from, Woolongong, where the bush-fires have recently (28th) (that date can't have been correct) been 'gutting'. She is based in Mosman, Sydney; so the fire won't have bothered her directly. Can't see her again as she does not go back onto 'days' again until the day we leave (B......). We finished the night-off, with a T-bone steak in the 'Bamboo' restaurant.

Sunday 27-10-68

page 122

Duty today and the ship is open to the public. I'm on the Flight-deck to mingle with the visitors, stop all smoking and mind that Aussies don't go putting anything into their pockets. I was asked things; from "would I swap cap-tallies", "Could you find 'so-and-so" to "Could you show me to the gangway" from a couple of nurses who were open for 'trapping' but I couldn't get off the (B) ship 'cos of the duty and besides that I was skint. I've had all the good-times I'm going to have here;.......So I thought.

Monday 28-10-68

page 122

Was given a 'make and mend so, Mick, Dolly and I and a few others set-off for Bondi Beach for the afternoon. As it happened – no surf (big stuff i.e.) There were a few bikini's down there (quite a few). There was one 'tottie' who could not sit still and ran-around like something 'pepped-up'.

We buried 'Mac'; gave him a set of 'upper-deckers' and the same tottie came up, stuck a brolly in the sand behind his head then took a photo of us with entombed 'Mac' in the fore-ground.

MAD! She wanted another photo of us all waving at her – we obliged. MADDER!!!

Diary entry for the day continued on the next page

I hired-out a 'king-size' float (\$1 down & 60c back) to paddle about the bay on. I was trying to kneel on it so I spent half my time in the water swimming after it.

Mick (Rodgers) and Dave (Simkins) started digging their way home and gave up about one foot down (or up in the case of Australia). Dolly ran into the water, stepped into one of the holes and twisted his ankle; he's known as 'Skippy' now.

We caught a bus back to Sydney and stepped off at the Paddington, Returned Servicemen's League (RSL). It is one of the many hotels belonging to this Aussie organisation; which holds very strong views regarding the Vietnam War. In there we were given a free bowl of stew.

We then left for Johnny's – Royal Naval House for a \$1 meal; (very good for the price).

We set-off walking back to the ship but gave up after crossing the road which leads across the bridge; the nearest I ever got to crossing it. [Sydney Harbour Bridge].

<u>Tuesday 29-10-68</u>

page 123

Wednesday 30-10-68

I spent both days on board and did a 'sub' for Ozzie (Trev Osborne) (\$2) so I could send laundry.

Thursday 31-10-68

page 123

Left our berth at Garden Island at 10.00 and sailed from the harbour followed closely by HMS Glamorgan. I was 'manning' the deck in 'Whites' and when we headed into wind the stokers in the boilers had a 'blow-through' and we were showered with soot. Anchored in, Jarvis Bay.



Photo of Hermes leaving Sydney

I'm standing on that deck somewhere.

Friday 01-11-68

page 124

Typical day in the life at sea – Ha! No hitches.

At 0900 we were visited by 'Chain and Ball', Trackers and Sky-Hawks; both USA aircraft being used by the Aussies on their flag-ship, *HMAS Melbourne* which was in a, dry-dock at Garden Island, Sydney while we were in. Also in harbour was the Yankee built *HMAS Hobart* which recently, whilst off Vietnam was struck by three Sparrow missiles fired from Yankee aircraft. (They must have tired of bombing their own guys so now they are attacking their allies). *Today we call it 'Friendly Fire'*.

Mail was due up at 1300; the call for it, however never came up until 2040. Mick and I had a bet on my getting a letter; there was a pint on it; the first pint in Subic (Philippines) Thing is, out there the natives sell only, a mixture between, locally brewed rum and meth's. I won the bet with a letter from Mum to say there's another car in the family (....?.....).

I've written all my letters before sailing so that should give me - a week out of the writing-pad.

<u>Chain and Ball</u>: derogatory term for Aussies

<u>HMAS Melbourne</u>: (R21) was a Majestic class light aircraft carrier of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). The ship was laid down for the Royal Navy as the lead ship of the Majestic class in April 1943, and was launched as HMS Majestic (R77) in February 1945. Operating from 1955 until 1982.

She was involved in two major collisions with allied vessels. On the evening of 10 February 1964, Melbourne collided with and sank HMAS Voyager when the Daring class destroyer altered course across her bow. <u>Eighty-two of Voyager's crew were killed</u>.

Melbourne re-entered service at the conclusion of the refit on 14 February 1969 and performed sea trials in Jervis Bay

The second collision occurred in the early morning of 3 June 1969, when Melbourne collided with and sank the Allen M. Sumner class destroyer USS Frank E. Evans in similar circumstances. <u>Seventy-four United States Navy (USN) personnel died</u>

<u>Subic</u>: I had heard of wild tales of Subic Bay from those who had been on the Vic's previous commission. In the event we never visited the place during our deployment.

<u>Saturday 02-11-68</u> page 124

Dull weather and a dull day for us; no work either (Allelluya). I made a new writing board today to stick my "photies" on.

We have sailed up and down Jervis Bay since departing; we anchored off-shore last night to conduct compass-swinging tests and a few other tests. We are anchoring again tonight at 2100. No mail for me today. The ship has lost about a fortnight's mail somewhere between UK and us.





Feb. 1964 *HMAS Melbourne* showing bow damage after collision with Destroyer, *HMAS Voyager*

June 1969 After collision with *HMAS Melbourne* the remaining floating aft section of the Destroyer, *USS Frank E Evans*



RAN Tracker - (Yank) Deck approach practice for pilots



RAN Sky-Hawk - (Yank) Deck approach practice for pilots

Sunday 03-11-68 page 125

Sunday sea routine – knocked off at 0900. Managed two letters K & K because I couldn't sleep in the afternoon; as everyone else does. Was called-out on the F/D at 1700 and offered a make and mend for tomorrow. Earned myself an easy ½ tot of Jim's for a 10min sub.

Monday 04-11-68 page 125

It is 'Mischievous Night' back home tonight. Anything and everything will go! I had my make and mend cancelled in order to work on the flight-deck and for the same reason I decided not to take the 'tot'. I wouldn't take even beer at lunch-time knowing I had to go up on the flight-deck; it's pushing providence.

Lt. Penfold lived up to his daily delirium over 'bombing-up' the Bucc's.

There were two mail calls this afternoon – again no letters for me, - bit 'chocker' about it. In future I'll confine mail to writing and sending cards from each place I visit.

(I seem to have been rather sensitive regarding the ratio and frequency of; mail sent to mail received).

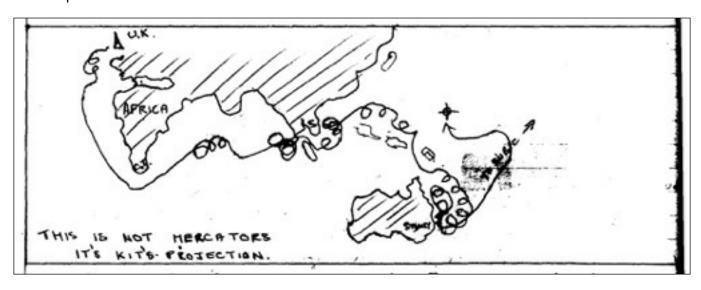
We should be in Subic Areas in a week or so's time; where we can fire and launch live Guided Missiles: Firestreaks, Bullpups and Redtops, without offending anyone.

Hong-Kong looks like being a cold spot; for it is not many latitudes below UK, so it will be winter there.

It is Guy Fawkes Night; back home. This time last year I was prancing around the garden in 'Edelweiss' with Ron and Tim, entertaining the kiddies who were looking through the window at us. I mentioned it on a card to the kiddies that they were to celebrate 'it' for me this year.

We started on passage at 2200 last night steaming north at 19 ½ knots in company with *HMS Glamorgan HMS Diana* and *RFA Olna.*

Commission Update:- since Tuesday 21st May we have sailed 39,254 miles at an average of 15.1 knots. To accomplish that we have had to sail thus:



Mail was transferred by SAR to Glamorgan to be taken to Rockhampton, NSW.

<u>Wednesday 06-11-68</u> page 126

What a S----house trick! I had to clean the heads today and tonight for rounds the duty officer screwed his face up at the aroma from within! What can he expect from the food fed to us.

Actually our 'issue disinfectant' which i used freely down there smells worse than the smell it is covering-up.

We had a volley-ball match this evening against the Air Dept. We should have thrashed them but had Commander Hardy and Lt Donovon on our side (OLDIES) and with those two playing for us "who needs opponents".

When we reach 'Honkers' there is to be a road race; up to the top of the 'Peak'. Penfold is in it and organising it. I think I will be selected for it. The peak is 3000ft so no-one runs the full leg; instead it's run as a relay.

We are in the tropics now and the first of the bronzy-bronzy zealots were up on the flight-deck this afternoon; I was there too. With working between-decks during sunlight hours I appreciate any time I get off.

The temperature is rising; hell of a fast!

Thursday 07-11-68

page 127

Was given a make and mend: bronzy sesh' up on the 'round-down but the temperature was about 105°F so I only spent an hour on deck.

1730: our first training period for the Peak race. We had a turn-out of 10, though I would like to see three teams, each of 6 people, so infuse competition within ourselves on the day of the race.

At present the record is held by the crew of *HMS Eagle* gained on their last trip out here; we're out to beat it! I understand there is a beer-bar at the top if that is of any incentive to the rest of the lads. If I am in any state to 'down a drink' I hope there will be someone up there to 'line them up' for me after the race.

At the mo' I'm the only one in the w/shop needing a hair-cut (yob).

Another strike has hit Sydney. This time it is the postal workers so unless Kerry got a letter off early it may be 3 weeks before I hear from her. Even now both hers and Kathy's letters have to go via London and then to Singapore, which is a fortnight before I get it, (the letter that is)!

<u>Friday 08-11-68</u> page 127

Admiral Griffin is 'about' doing his rounds. He is coming around the Section tomorrow though I won't be there as Penfold is 'getting on my back' about my hair. The chop, literally.

We were training again; same routine though this time we pushed a little harder. No PTI would take over our training programme so it looks as if Penfold will be in charge for the three weeks ahead. He pushes hard and can stand the pace himself so we don't really need anyone else up there. We are unofficially known as Hong Kong Harriers and if there is ever a moment free on the F/D we will be called, as such over the 'Tannoy'.

Mail is going off tomorrow and coming on too. I've stopped expecting any now. (1 letter in a month) so if by any chance I do get one: 'Fairy Nuff'! I'm not answering it though! One card a month is plenty from me as far as I'm concerned; besides my time is taken-up now with, training, diary, PPE and when I'm ashore the track of time becomes lost to me.

So in the words of William Shakespeare in one of his less sober moments "F--- Em"

Question posed or a thought for the day.

If the Chief Bosun was caught masturbating by a set of pulleys would it be called 'Discharge by Purchase'?



SS Canberra

FLASH-BACK SYDNEY showing 'International Quay' with SS Canberra berthed alongside. The four promontories are the quays from which the ferries operate to Manly Beach, Taronga Park and Luna Park etc, where I caught a "Lady" class steamer to Taronga. Two hydrofoils terminus here too.

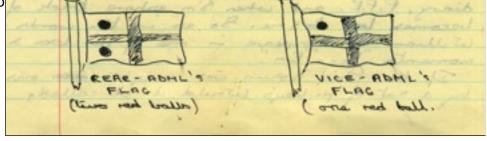
The tall building on the right is Australia House incorporating a rotating restaurant on top.

The building behind the Canberra's forrard mast is a 'pub' where I pulled a stool from under a 'Digger's' foot. He took offence to me (must've been thinking 'Pommie B-----) I told him I said "excuse me" before dragging it away from him. He reckoned he never heard me: Not surprisingly; I never said it, but he couldn't prove me wrong 'cept by calling me a liar (sweat). When I came back from the 'heads' I saw just how big he was. (Just as well I never pushed it with him).

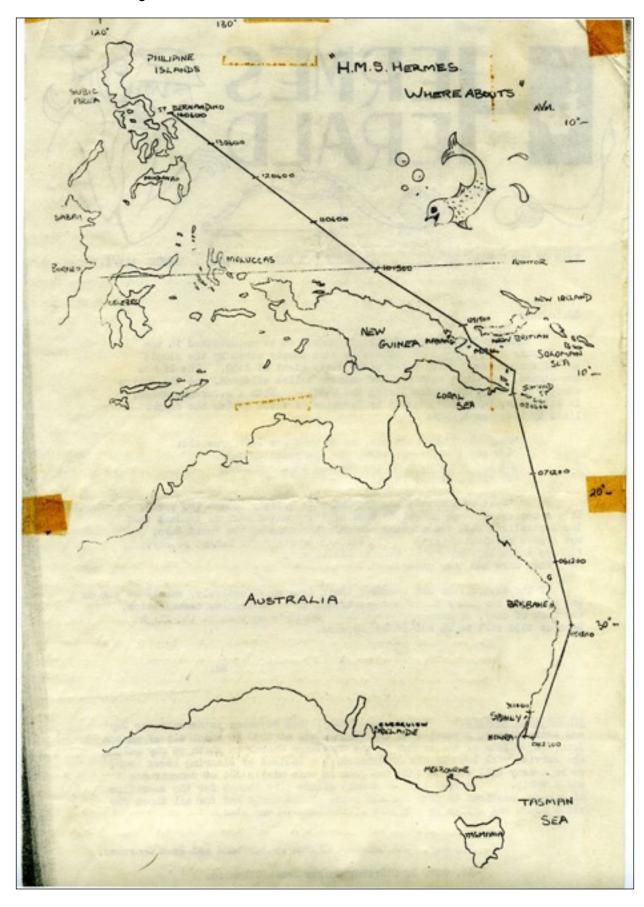
Saturday 09-11-68 page 128

Adml. John Griffin came into the Section this morning. His B13 came through for him to be rated up to Vice

Admiral as of No



Page 129



At 06.30 yesterday we commenced our passage through the Jomad Entrance from the Coral Sea and into the Soloman Sea. We are at, at the moment, transiting the straits between New Britain and New Guinea.

Tonight over the SRE we had a competition of initiative for the 'Hands'. We were given clues and a record which signified an association with an article/s to be taken to a part of the ship.

Our Peak training is being intensified. We did the normal 25 min. running and exercise then Joe Pickin (PTI) came along to give us a bit of extra help in exercises for our legs and stomachs that lasted 20 min. and we were knackered when he had finished us up with 8 sprints; the length of the 'Cat's'. We 'capped-it' though; for no sooner had he left us we started lapping the deck again.

My turn to be the "big OD" came. Over the SRE Lt Cdr Parry asked for someone to go up to him with a genuine plaster-cast on their right-leg. It just so happened that I had plaster-roll in my locker which I had brought with me, when we disbanded the 'Vic'; out of a medic chest. At first I was only going to supply the 'cast' but by the time I had sat down, Mick (*Rodgers*) had half my left leg bandaged-up. The left leg! Whoa there! 'off roll and start mummifying my right leg'. Mick Minter supplied the water, to set the cast from the tea-pot. The cast started setting pretty quickly; though I left a trail of white spots as I raced up to the passage on 3-deck; from there to the SRE, I had to limp (got to be realistic about these broken bones). I got there and the Lt Cdr was sitting there with a genuine plastered-up right leg. When he asked if mine was genuine (as it was still soggy) I told him I had been especially kicked for the benefit of his show and had just put it on. I told him the plaster came from 'The Vic' and he gave me two cans of Tiger beer; the prize for these games. I had been kicked too, by Mick, though I never got around to saying, that he had only been wearing flip-flops at the time. It was a great (Piss-fine) night!

I never included in the journal at the time that as I walked away to return to my Mess-deck I passed a guy making his way (rather slowly) towards the SRE wearing a plaster-cast; a real cast and a real limp from a real injury. I had been first to claim the prize and he knew I had; as I clutched the two cans of beer.

Mick Minter: LOEM Mick Minter; one of the bombhead leading hands. I was to spend two years with Mick in the future (1972 – 1974) when we both were posted to the same Electrical Mechanician (Air) course at HMS Daedalus, Lee on the Solent, Hants.

OD: Ordinary Rate. The basic rank/rate a man over 18 years old can hold in the RN. The term when used to call someone was to describe, implicitly that their behaviour was immature and unworthy.

Remembrance Sunday service today. It's raining, I'm not going! Early secure. Mail came aboard yesterday and I got one letter; from 'our lass' topped-up with jokes from the 'Tyke' – the Lity Rag-Mag.

The collapse of British Eagle is of concern to quite a few people as they were chartering flights for Operation Mistletoe; whereby they were to fly back to UK for 'Chrimbo' then join us a fortnight or so later in Singa's.

The sea developed quite a heavy swell but at 1630 we were up on deck, lapping and exercising. My legs don't ache on a morning now that all this training is becoming routine. The other muscles we are developing are our stomachs as they are going to take a beating. This hill we are running up is demoralising; I've been told by someone who has already 'run-it'.

No Earl Haig's fund collectors came around; just as well, the only coins I have to give away are two Aussie 10c pieces and not many organised funds will accept foreign coins, least of all, Poppy Day's.

From the places we visit, we all leave with a few coins of no monetary value to us. At the end of the commission a large bin or two will be placed in the ship where a great many people will pass and into these bins all the odd coins or notes, we've picked-up, can be disposed. It's surprising how much can be gathered and when they have been changed into Sterling the money will go toward a charity of some sort or another.

Crossed the Equator (again) at 1900. (Never felt the bump).

Our lass: my sister, Frances who was studying nursing at Leeds, Yorkshire.

My aching legs: In those days Nike and Rebok and Addidas trainers had not been invented. We did all our running, wearing plimsolls without arch support or impact absorbing heels and running on steel plate decks gave us terrible 'shin-splints'. I took some rubberised horse-hair packing material and fashioned some wedges to use as inserts for my heels, which I was wearing still on the race as I thought the slight elevation would assist in running up hill.

<u>Lity Rag-Mag:</u> I believe this was the title of the Leeds University magazine



<u>British Eagle</u>: In April 1948 Mr Harold Bamberg brought into being, Eagle Aviation by registering it as an Air Charter company as an independent and second largest British civil airline. By the summer of 1948 the company was fully employed in the 'Berlin Airlift, following the Russian imposed blockade of the city.

1968 started well. Two Boeing 707-138's. A new 707-365c had been handed over to Eagle at the end of 1967 but had been leased to Middle East Airlines. The new BAC 'One Elevens' were in service. However the tourist market was being depressed by the restriction of what money you were allowed to take out of the country. The Labour government under Harold Wilson imposed a restriction of (£50) on all Brit's wishing to take a holiday abroad.

6th November 1968 the company ceased to trade

See diary page 138. We learned that those due to fly home would get back to UK courtesy of RAF Transport.

Monday 11-11-68 page 131

Jim ('Jock' Henderson) is coming—up to the workshop for a fortnight, from G.P. (Gunners Party) in exchange for Dickie. (Alan Bird).

There was a flying programme on today so our training had to be fitted-in between launch and recovery times. Saw the NAAFI off with a 10c piece, buying a drink; they gave me the coin as change after we left Sydney and they said it was the only change there was; (gullible me took it). Anyway a day or two later I took it back expecting to get Sterling for it. They wouldn't take it! Tonight I took it up covering it with a 5 New Pence piece, took my two drinks and ran as soon as I was out of sight of the counter.

The last time I tried to get rid of it was at the 'Goffer-Bar'. I had the NAAFI boy mix up an 'ice-cream, strawberry goffer'; a pint of it, then handed him the 10c piece. He wouldn't take it, of course and as I refused to give anything else, I told him to pour it back. I didn't really want the drink, but just wanted to get 'up the nose' of the NAFF's because I had a 'Bazzie' on.

NAAFI The NAAFI (Navy and Army, Air Force Institute) formed on 1 January 1921 to look after the welfare of Britain's fighting men.

Before the NAAFI existed Armed Forces personnel relied on the donations of a few considerate officers and only occasional government contributions

Whilst the organisation officially started trading in January 1921, NAAFI was actually established on 6th December 1920 when a committee, led by Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for War, agreed that there should be one canteen organisation to serve all three services.

Goffer Naval name for a non-alcoholic drink such as lemonade; the place where goffers are sold is the Goffer Bar. An ice-cream goffer was a dearer alternative to a plain soda-drink.

'Bazzie' A term to describe a bad mood derived from the expletive 'bastard'.

It is now intended to fly-off, Okinawa, arriving there on Friday. Okinawa Island lays some 900 miles southwest of Tokyo and 300 miles east of Formosa (Tai-Wan). There are a couple of Yank's bases (air) so it will be 'diversion flying'.

(Thought for the day) "Should an engaged couple be frank and earnest, or should one be a girl?"

I nearly ended-up 'Doffing my lid' tonight for missing an Air Emergency muster due to training. The Duty PO said I was to appear on OOW's at mid-night, so I went and saw the 'pig' and explained it ("Look into my honest blue eyes, etc.....)

PAY-DAY TOMORROW!!

"ROTARY BLADES OVER THE BRIDGE"



Wessex Mk 3 from the Hermes over-flying Sydney Harbour bridge

There are 8 traffic lanes for motor vehicles and a two-way rail line.



Solids and Liquids RAS with RASS SUPPLY, HMS Diana, HMS Hermes and RFA Reliant A84

The, Aussie RAS ship 'Supply' had mounted 'Bofors' on it's foc'stle. It may have been armed for use in Viet-Nam commitments. The photo shows our side-lift at hangar level. This RAS took place before entering Sydney____

RFA Reliant: sea

The first, Air Victualing Stores Issuing Ship capable of replenishing aircraft carriers at

Designed as a, grain carrier. Launched in 1953 as MV Somersby. Purchased in 1957 for conversion.

Commissioned as RFA Reliant, A84. She was affectionately referred to as 'the Yacht' and kept in immaculate condition. She first sailed for the Far-East in Dec 1958.

Wednesday 13-11-68 page 133

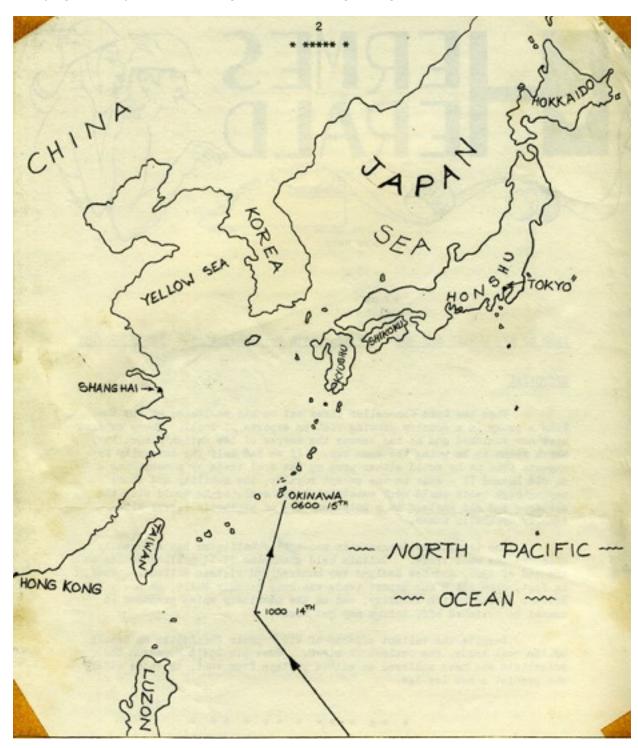
We have been sailing through a 200 mile wide tropical storm ('Lola') The sea has not been terrifically rough but all fixed-wing flying has been cancelled and all weather-decks are out of bounds. The section was stood-down today - no work on.

PTI Joe Pickin took over our training again tonight. He knocked us up; did the exercises with us and ran about as though he had done nothing and pushed us.

All I've had to eat today is a bowl of cereal. I ditched my dinner after one mouthful. After training tonight; running through funnel-smog, it was all I could do to drink a cup of tea.

I was up at 0630 this morning to get in early for payment in the dining-hall. Everyone was given a cholera inoculation before getting their 'Mons'. This jab clears everybody, until we are back to UK. It is one of the less important jabs (200 yrs since any matelot died of it). Only £4 remaining to pay on my watch loan.

Very little flying on today; we are 'closing' Okinawa, sailing through the North Pacific Ocean.



<u>Friday 15-11-68</u> page 134

The sea has calmed-down a great deal; though rollers are continually breaking under the wind.

Boring day for me; PPE notes almost complete, which when passed will leave me with no more 'Pussers' exams for me between then and at least 1972: (earliest I expect to be selected for Leading-Rate course).

We had talked (buzzes) about visiting Tokyo before the ships programme was published. That was whilst in dry-dock. Every ship before starting its new commission has it's 'buzzes', promulgated by word of mouth, as to where it will visit. Either: Olympic Games, International Exhibitions etc. For some reason Japan had come up on our 'Buzz List'.

We are not going there – but very close. Okinawa; which was one time part of the, Honlable Japanese

Empire Shore leave is to be granted to us there; 'Buckner Bay'.

Nakagusuku Bay (, Nakagusuku-wan?) is a bay off the southern coast of Okinawa Island in Japan, at 26°13'N 127°52'E. American soldiers nicknamed the bay, Buckner Bay, after General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. He was killed during the closing days of the Battle of Okinawa by enemy artillery fire, making him the highest-ranking American to have been killed by enemy fire during the war.

The Japanese Empire consists of four large and many small islands. The four large islands are: Honshu. Shikoku, Hokkaido and Kyushu and have an area of 141,529 sq. miles, with a population in excess of 100.000.000.

Tokyo the capital of the Empire, having a population of about 10,000,000, is situated in the south-eastern part of Honshu.

According to Japanese tradition, Jimmu, the first Emperor of Japan ascended the throne on 11th February 660 BC. The dynasty founded by him still reigns and the monarchy is hereditary in the male heirs of the Imperial House. The ruler is correctly described as Emperor: the archaic word, Mikado (which was purloined by Gilbert and Sullivan for their light opera) is of doubtful etymology and appeared to mean 'August Gate'; ie. The entrance to the sacred precincts where the Emperor lived.

Flying is being continued through until 23.00, so no training for the 'Harriers' tonight. I'm taking advantage of the rest and having an early night.

<u>Saturday 16-11-68</u> page 135

We are operating now, almost continually in sight of Okinawa. With the wind over the F/D it's not necessary to exceed 8 knots for 'recovering A/C. For launching, speed is 14 knots. Any less than such would not provide the catapults boilers with enough steam.

No training for me again tonight; two nights without a 'jog' is going to make tomorrows training harder.

<u>Sunday 17-11-68</u> page 135

Was up at 05.15 for Flying Stations. The COD bought mail on: Chrimbo card from Eidelweiss and a letter from Helen (well !!).

Training with, 'Pickin' was hell on my legs. Two days without showed on me.

Eidelweiss: This was the name given to 2, Kingfisher Ave; Jean and Ron's home.

Spent the day in the work-shop; Ejection Seat-Bay as they were short-handed. Fair weather and the ship is steaming in a square area off, Okinawa. (According to Jock it's pronounced Och! an awa!) "I ken what h'is seyin' but a dinna ken phet h'is talkin' aboot, the noo". Kilt-swinging, haggis-bashing, caber-tossing, thistle-stomping, twit......Vote SNP!!

Advert in, The Times (sent to me from home) asking for Oriental – rugs, antiques, tapestries etc. There seems to be a market opening; first and foremost problem.......'Mons'.

£4.00 per week was not going to place me well to purchase antiques.

<u>Tuesday 19-11-68</u> page 136

RAS Day. The ship became reckless.

- 1) Ozzie (*Trev Osborne*) made a couple of turns of a rope around his hand, lowering a store by pulley; soon as he took the weight his hand was pulled into the pulley broke a bone in his hand and he's in plaster now for four weeks.
- 2) Twice a PO was nearly lost over the side when a wire coiled-up behind him; he was saved by an Aussie officer.
- 3) That same Aussie officer was knocked 'clean' over by a Paliton when a store from *Regent* came across the jackstay and hit him square in the chest. The G.P. laughed at him so when he got up he said "It takes a bullet in the heart to kill an Aussie" (Big Deal).
- 4) Still during the RAS, 2 x 1000lb bombs were being brought across on pallets. One such load came across and landed on the feet of a 'stoker'. He was wearing gym-shoes at the time subsequently crushed bones and plenty of blood. He was told to go to the Sick-Bay, but just stood there unable to walk.
- 5) At about 15.15 an Observer of 893 Sqdn. Lt. Duncan, fired his Ejection-Seat at: zero feet zero speed. He escaped with his life somehow! The seat shot clear of the ship; thus avoiding any other accident on deck and he landed on the 'mainplane' on his back. He eased himself off and was taken down the Sick-Bay with a few bruises and needing treatment for shock.

I was in the RAS; taking clothing down to 'slops' via the 'chogie tailors'. The chogies shared a few jokes with us and 'lashed us up' to a can of orange each.

Also: at Okinawa this morning the entire crew escaped when their B52, with a full payload of bombs, blew-up on take-off.

<u>Palliton:</u> A hand operated, hydraulic fork lifting trolley used for movement of heavy stores.

Lt. Duncan The Observer of 893 Sqdn. was (I seem to recall) charged, grounded and returned to the UK. He had developed a custom of tugging on the sear-wire (that fires the seat) each time he went to fly; to be assured that the seat would fire him from the aircraft in an emergency. His fears were not unfounded; the Sea Vixen had a record of difficulties when ejecting from the Observers position (It was referred to, sometimes, as 'the coal hole'). Flying any carrier aircraft was a dangerous job; the Sea Vixen was no different. Between 1960 and 1970 no fewer than, 51 aircrew were killed. Ref http://www.thunder-and-lightnings.co.uk/seavixen/history.phpf

Wednesday 20-11-68 page 137

I have had a stinking cold building up over the past three days, so tonight I'm trying to 'sweat-it-out' under 5 layers of blanket and for the first time since coming on board I'm taking a tranquiliser to (I hope) keep me asleep once the heat is on.

We have had visits by US (Navy): Trackers from Okinawa. A few Yanks came aboard to be shown around. They (bragging) commented that the Hermes (smallest carrier in service) was pretty small to land-on. So Ron Badenhorst; the O/C told them, sarcastically that it was big enough for us; intoning the British don't need something the size of four football pitches to land-on, without breaking out in a sweat.

<u>Thursday 21-11-68</u> page 137

Yesterday the Vixens and Buccaneers took part in an air defence exercise being run by Air Defence authorities in Okinawa. They opened up at 200 ft and then ran in towards the island. They were intercepted; four were shot down by the defenders. However the CO of 893 shot down 2 of his adversaries and made two more intercept each other.

Apparently, under the influence of those tranquilizers I performed a bit. They guarantee 8 hrs sleeps (one pill); I took two at 1800. I first woke at 0400 in the morning – went, or at least staggered to the 'heads' where my focussing was all wrong. Ozzie was down there at the same time and had to half-help me back to the mess. I then slept on until 0715 and woke-up feeling marvellous and have been that way all day. Also I did get rid of my cold though I hope to never have to go through the same treatment. Two pills, two cans of beer and then a 'Toddie' – Jim's cure. (A whet of whisky in boiling water and I hate whisky to drink now).

Got my \$5 (Yank) back; with Abe' Lincoln joke!

"Now apart from that little incident, Mrs Lincoln, did you enjoy the opera"?

Mail came aboard – 3 bags for the ship and I 'dipped-out'. I'm due for an answer from Aussie!

'hate whisky' My dislike for whisky followed a week spent on the bombing range at Tain, near Inverness, Morayshire. A group of us Junior (16 -17 yrs old) 'bombheads' had been sent across from Lossiemouth to rebuild and paint in bright colours, the targets set up for the Hawker Hunter GA11 from 764 Sqdn. to attack with 25 lb practice-bombs. We had had the evening to go into Tain where a half-bottle of whisky was purchased. When we arrived back at the garage in which we were billeted, I agreed to see the bottle 'off-inone' for a bet which I won and lost.

The paltry sum of money was mine but I was violently sick, immediately (which was a very good thing). To this day I find the smell of whisky offensive.

Those involved in 'Operation Mistletoe' will be flown back to the UK by the RAF transports.

Tonight at about 20.20, AEW Gannet 260, piloted by Lt. Hutchinson overshot the angle-deck, after the engine had failed to pick-up again and it went into the 'brink'. The Gannet had already passed twice over the deck, unsuccessful in its attempts to catch a wire. On the third attempt it missed all the arrester wires but the Last Minute Neg's were late in firing a 'red'. The Gannet cannot be rapidly throttled back as fuel floods the engine causing a cut-out. (that's how the text appears in the journal and I don't recall the description nor the refuting which must have lead me to cross through it) This is I think what happened; the pilot throttled-back to get the aircraft airborne again but as the craft passed over the angle there was complete silence and the A/c 'went-in'.

There was a rough swell-on the sea but amazingly the aircraft, for a while, just sat there on the water.

The pilot opened his cockpit, stood on his seat and in a calm voice that could be heard from the F/D called to his two crewmen, "Now come-on out, you chaps. Don't panic, you know the drill". This is one the few cases when the entire crew has escaped from a Gannet. '*Diana*' was night-plane-guard and its Gemini picked up 260's crew.

It took a full 20 min. to lower our 'Whaler' to go across (to HMS Diana) to pick-up our crew. Suspended 5 ft from the 'Og' a large wave came up and hit the boat. The after-end was released before the forrard-end and even then the boat was attached to the ship by the 'painter'. The swell caught the boat and spun it about. A 'stoker' sitting in the back leaped for his life-line and started climbing up to the boat-deck. The 'killick' I/C shouted for him to return, but he looked terrified at the prospect of going back so he just carried on shinning-up. (I remember well the stoker shouting back at the CPO, "You can troop me") Seeing the way the way the boat was being buffeted about the Chief Bosun swung himself out on a line and was down in the boat in seconds, had cast-off the lines, had the motor started, took charge and they headed toward 'Diana'.

This is the 'SECOND' accident and it is claimed that they come in batches of threes? We are bombing on Monday – Stand-by for a Buccaneer graunch – perhaps.



Okinawa (post-card)

We anchored in Buckner Bay, Okinawa. At 1400 I went ashore in one of the Yanks L.C.M.'s. Everyone in the boat was showered with sea-water 4-5 times (waves spraying over the front) before we landed at White Beach.

From White beach I took a ride in to the village (so it was called) in a Servicemen's bus, which was more like riding in a tank than a bus.



I was dropped off at the USO Club just outside the USAF Kadena Base.

That village, as it may have been the last time any of our lads were here, has become a fairly large town of one main street around which all the big shops and Night-clubs, Strip-shows, etc. are built. Away from the main street the buildings are atrocious constructions of wood and cement. The prices here are higher than those in Singa's.

The locals here are Japanese and for the most speak little or no English. There's only one thing to do ashore and that is to drink.

I wouldn't go into the Strip-Clubs or even the Approved bars, (ie. those with an 'A' above the door). Most of the time between wandering around, I spent in the gift shops. Wood carvings (Japanese or Taiwan-China) are various and plentiful.

In the bars, locally brewed "Hooch" (drink similar to meths) is available; it is cheap but it's a killer as was proved late this night. A 'stoker' from *Hermes*. ME² Travers died of alcoholic poisoning. No.3 this commission.

After drinking ashore with his mates (we were told) he had downed some of the local Hooch. He was brought back on board and his mates thinking they were helping him to not be placed 'on-report' for arriving back 'drunk' managed to get him passed the Duty watch and down to his mess and put in his bunk. During the night a killick in the mess checked-up on him to find him in some state of paralysis, but it proved too late to save him.

Bored and with little money left, I decide to come back on board for supper, on the 1630 liberty-boat but was told there would be no more boats until 1730 so I went into the Enlisted Servicemen's Club here at White Beach.

At the bar I met a Yank; a civvy mariner "Morgan from Texas USA" who 'lashed-me-up' to drinks and told me how great we British are. (*Drunk or ingratiating; he thought Yorkshire was bigger than Texas*)

The other Yanks there were pretty helpful and not spouting-off about 'Uncle Sam's Country'. I had a few dances, became a bit rowdy and left. My liberty boat broke-down alongside *HMS Diana*. I was stranded on *Diana* for about an hour causing 'nause' with the OOW and POOW.

Not in the journal:

1) The dance-hall; 3-4 girls and about 100 + guys and dealing with the 'Hunny-Monster' who tried to cut in on me on the dance floor.

I managed to get a dance with one of the local Japanese girls. We had hardly started to dance when this huge guy with a voice from his boots but not sounding too bright tried to cut-in. I pretended to talk to the girl then turned to his face and told him. "She says she would like to have the next dance with him but not until she had finished dancing with me". The music ended I thanked her and walked off without waiting to see how she or he fared.

I then proceeded to drink too much and ran out of money.

2) Working in the burger van down by the quay, earning enough to pay for a burger.

I made my way down to the quay to wait for a liberty boat to take me back to the Hermes. I was hungry but had no money left. I offered to work in the burger-van to help serve drunken sailors as they arrived; to earn a burger or two. He didn't see how I could pay so I said I would serve and charge a little more than the standard price and when I had raised enough to pay for a couple of burgers I would eat then stop. I got my burgers.

3) Several liberty-boats going unserviceable.

This was unfortunate. I wanted to get back to my ship but the timetable was now nonsense. I climbed aboard a landing craft which was towing one of the broken boats and once we were away from the jetty I climbed up to the position where the helm was standing. The helmsman told me to get back into the hold area where all the sea-spray was falling. My response to that was to climb aft and down onto a ledge at the rear of the craft. There I assumed a position of balance. The danger was real. There was a heavy swell that we were running into and a relatively short length of rope attached to the bow of the towed boat. If I had fallen I would have barely got wet before the bow of the boat would have struck me and I was not wearing a life-jacket. I was lippy with the helm shouting back something to the effect that, "Us Brits aren't afraid of a bit of danger".

I am sure he would not have been impressed. Looking back !...... I don't need to add to that.

5) Landing Craft Mechanized [LCM] arriving at HMS Diana not my ship.

Instead of arriving at the Hermes the LCM arrived alongside HMS Diana where I had to disembark by climbing up a knotted rope to a wooden spar. And here I found myself on the deck of our escort frigate.

6) Putting my arm around the shoulder of the OOW and calling him 'Skin'

I was not about to become contrite or sorry for myself. In my exuberance I strolled over to the very young Duty Officer of the Watch [OOW] and put my arm his shoulder and called him 'Skin' [naval slang for one who has not started to shave]. His response was to extricate himself and walk further aft, sensibly leaving me with the Duty PO.

7) Switching off the power to the deck lighting.

I needed the loo and asked where the heads were. I was directed somewhere within the superstructure. Having taken care of my need I was making my way back when I espied an electrical switch panel. I proceeded to start throwing switches and effectively started shutting-off lighting in the immediate vicinity.

8) Climbing down a knotted rope into a boat alongside, nursing a Jerry-can of fuel which had broken free and being transported back to the Hermes, stinking of fuel.

Perhaps the complications of having me charged and restrained on another ship vs. sent back may have been considered I don't know but a vessel came alongside. I could see a jerry-can was bouncing about in the hold. I climbed over the guardrail and quickly shinned down into the boat; where I secured the fuel canister by holding it. The can was leaking and the fuel ended up on me and my clothing. The boat left and I did finally get taken back to the Hermes.

page 140

Eventually I was brought back aboard here. I was sodden from spray which continually broke over the side of the boat as there was a very heavy swell, on.

Oh yes – I lost my cap again – the one I had just bought. This time it wasn't pinched by a taxi-driver; it is floating in 'Buckner Bay' somewhere.

<u>Sunday 24-11-68</u> page 140

0800 I had to report to the Reg. Office. I went up beforehand; i.e. before the MAA turned-up. I was given an ear-blast by the RPO and told I was dead lucky that I wasn't on a charge because the OOW on Diana did not wish to press charges. "Obnoxious" was how I had been described by him. Well after being stranded on the wrong ship and completely soaked I had some reason to feel in a mood for causing 'nause'. (No signs of contrition here) Furthermore from DIANA to HERMES I had to nurse a can of petrol to prevent it being buffeted about in the bottom of the boat. Subsequently my clothes were messed up by the time I was back on board. (No, definitely no contrition).

A few 'pipes' regarding the stoker who died last night have been made; broadcasted over the ship warning all liberty men to leave the Hooch alone. Last night another rating lost his 'ear'? I'm staying aboard today as I'm Duty Armourer. I wonder what else is going to happen before we leave this place.

An oddity of the island is that the natives build shrines on the hill-sides; made from concrete or locally hewn stone. 5' – 6' high and not much longer.



!

The principle religion of Japan is Shintoism and in order to pray the believers go before a 'god-shelf' or Kamidana; a form of miniature Buddhist temple kept in the house. These shrines must be out-door versions.

Another bad day – This morning at 0800 Gannet 262 went into the sea. It was launched at a speed of about 120 knots and its port wing folded on take-off and the A/C plunged into the 'Oggin' The 'Obbie', Sub-Lt Tracy got out but was dead when he came aboard after being winched out of the sea by SAR Helo. His body was flown to a Military Hospital, on Okinawa. The pilot and the other crewman: Sub. Lt. Steel and Sub. Lt. Broadway are both still missing, 'presumed dead'. All sorties for 849 Sqdn. have been cancelled for today. The day has been spent in a search for wreckage over an area of 50 sq. miles, by ourselves and Helos from 814, by *Diana, Regent* and *Tidespring*; all rather unsuccessfully. 262 will be lying in between 200 – 300ft. of water.

No training tonight for Harriers

Last night of those who went ashore one lad got knocked down by a car and came back on board with a tyre mark across his chest. There was a craze ashore for 'Jacks' to swap hats with the Yanks and they came back with caps of matelots, Marines and Air Force. Two yanks – dressed in our uniform tried to get on here so they could get to Hong Kong.

"But gee-man, cain't you see 'aim British"

"Get lost"!

I've lost interest in mail coming aboard now; it's so long since I had a letter.

As of late I've started having changes in eating habits; ie. I don't always manage every meal so now I buy a few tins of foodstuff from the NAFF's. I started-off with Mandarin oranges, tired of them and went on to pineapple chunks with fresh-cream not served up in a dish but mixed-up in my tea-mug! Etiquette doesn't demand a great deal when eating in the mess! I change from fruit to baked-beans – cold out of the can but, "Every little bean must be heard as well as seen" and so as to prevent any nausea (not that I mind) I'm changing to tinned soup served cold.

Most of the tinned food, we obtained in Sydney. The Aussies eat a lot out of cans so they have a wider range of meals out of cans than we do ourselves in the UK. They also mix fruit-juices (Pineapple & Orange or Pineapple & Grapefruit etc).

Four of our Sea-Vixen had to be diverted due to some failure with the arrester-gear. If it can't be rectified we could be sailing straight for 'Singas' and miss-out on the 'Honkers' run.

Oggin: Naval slang for, the sea.

Obbie: Observer; one of the two commissioned officer aircrew who occupied the seats in the rear of the AEW 3 Gannet.

Sub Lt. Steel: As I recall Sub Lt Steel was also flying in 260 which went down on Friday 22nd only three days before. When the SAR diver first reached the sinking aircraft he could see the pilot actively trying to get out of the cockpit and so went aft; to see if he could be of more help to the two Observers who might not be faring so well; as they had to exit sideways from the A/C. Tragically whilst he succeeded in rescuing one we learned only later that the pilot was in fact struggling to make good his exit. It was a terrible personal loss to all the Sqdn; aircrew and maintainers alike and on the evening they all got together in the squadron mess with crates of beer, to share and deal with their grief.

Fresh-cream: (actually 'sterilised cream' supplied in tin cans).

Tuesday 26-11-68 page 142

As per 'Natch' – no mail – lousy P-on mail sevice.

Pep talk from Penfold. "All 'O' ratings [i.e. those not converted to, Ordnance Electrical ratings] will remain as such until they are finally redundant – April '73". Tomorrow I'm putting in a request for redundancy in the 1970's.

Back into training for the 'Peak'

Natch: Common parley; shortening the word 'naturally'.

P-on: peon (peasant like)

Wednesday 27-11-68 page 142

I have bruised my heel-bone and called-off training for today.

Thursday 28-11-68 page 142

Most everyone, is checking over their 'civvies' in preparation for the best run ashore yet.

Friday 29-11-68 page 142

We steamed into Hong Kong harbour; passing through numerous small islands and dozens of 'junks'. Though most of the glamorous looking boats with dragons-heads etc. have disappeared and given way to mechanised junks which look as though they have never seen paint the Chinese water people still have one or two junks solely dependent on the wind. They still pray to various gods of good-will, of fishermen and celebrate carnival type festivities in much the same way as did their ancestors. Each year is bestowed upon an animal; ie. the year of the dog, the ram, the monkey etc. and according to the animal the religious people will vary slightly, their way of life.

On my first day in I went and had a look around in general; to get my bearings. The China Fleet Club, Royal Navy; which is not far from the dockyard gate is now open to Yankees. To sit inside the bar, apart from the San Miguel beer being served, one could be sitting in the Home Club back in Pompey. A very good meal is served in the building's restaurant by an all Chinese staff. The windows each have an iron mesh guard in front; these are for protection against Chogie rioters when sticks and stones start being hurled. When the *Hermes* was last in here there were riots 'on'; for it was helos of 814 Sqdn that landed troops onto the roof of the Hong Kong Hilton.

Poverty is rife on the island. On the second day in, three lads and I went shopping. We climbed into a taxi and asked for Victoria Shopping Centre. The fool of a driver took us (with the meter running) to the Victoria Army barracks and pulled up outside the NAAFI shopping centre. Me, being full of tolerance and understanding hurled abuse at the driver for his stupidity.

Excerpts from Wikipedia for Hong Kong the year before we arrived

On 8 July 1967, hundreds of armed militia from the PRC (Peoples Republic of China) fired at the Hong Kong Police at Sha Tau Kok. Five policemen were killed in the brief exchange of fire. Bomb disposal experts from the police and the British military defused as many as 8,000 home-made bombs. Statistics rated 1 in every 8 bombs was genuine. On 19 July, leftists set up barbed wire defences on the 20-storey Bank of China building (owned by the PRC government). In response the police fought back and raided leftists strongholds. In one of the raids, helicopters from HMS Hermes - a Royal Navy carrier landed police on the roof of Kiu Kwan Mansion. Upon entering the building the police discovered bombs and weapons as well as a leftist hospital complete with dispensary and an operating theatre.

Eventually we decided upon being driven to the Hilton and walked into the shopping area. We were met by a 'shark' hawking for some shop offering 10% discount on all their goods; reluctantly but for the want of nothing better to do we followed the fellow. Only when we reached the shop's apartment did we find out that their starting price was 20% to 30% higher than any other shop; so they were trying to 'see-us-off'? "NO JOY".

Bargaining becomes fun after a while and relatively easy when you don't particularly need the: dress, watch or toy that you are bargaining for, as in the case upon the Cable-Deck; when I was offered a ladies pendant watch on a chain for HK\$ 45 I got it for HK\$ 18. It'll make a good gift for someone. Obviously I never 'saw-him-off' at the price or he would have never let me have it. But when the customer is satisfied with the price he has paid, a good bargain has been made. 'Jack' often gets 'seen-off'. Everyone does at some time or another. "I'm no exception".

I've had a couple of runs ashore; literally, in my sports gear running up, The Peak at 0600 on a morning; I was in the, Number 2 team. Our first took place without us knowing the full distance we had to run. The second which was the last run; one of the team let us down from the start, by failing to turn-up. I and Lt. Penfold had a run from about half-way up, to the very top of the Peak from where we had one hell of a view. On one narrower part of the road, the Land-Rover, trying to get passed me forced me off the road. It was lucky for me that the peak slope wasn't too abrupt or I would have been waiting at the bottom for them.

Our No. 1 team consisting mainly of Navy runners had their last run on Friday 6th when they broke the official record. They knocked a minute off the time of the previous time holders *HMS Eagle* who ran it in

23min. 54.5 sec. Our team's time was 22 min. 48.4 sec. The Champs!

HMS Albion is thinking of putting forward a team to try and beat us.

I was very disappointed in The Tiger Balm Gardens here. There had been talk of them being much better than the Gardens in Singapore, but most of the plaster models of people animal and plants have not been painted in the last decade. The torture scenes are pictures in 'bass-relief.

The race up the Peak was a relay race by three runners who ran a distance as a sprint to the next man and then at the change-over hopped into the Land-Rover was wrapped in a Pusser's blanket (to keep warm) then delivered further up the hill to await the arrival of the next runner. The distance was between 2 and 3 miles but the incline was extremely demanding. The morning air was very cold and I remember using and sharing Zubes (boiled sweets tasting like menthol and aniseed which opened the airways to aid breathing – "Zubes, good for your tubes", was how they were advertised).

I was knocked off the road, I learned later from the 'chock-head driver of the Land-Rover, because the Commander wanted to get in front of me to get some good photos of the runners. Well if he took a picture of me climbing back up the rocks and rubble I never learned of it. The strain of running and my endeavours to climb up and continue after being knocked down took its toll on me and I was to discover what 'Piles' were (I thought only old men got such things).

Hong Kong other bits:

- 1. American servicemen had to be back on base by midnight and so we would happily encourage the bar girls (who made their wages by getting customers to buy non-alcoholic drinks for them; 'cold tea' or 'Sticky Greens' [see page 252] at inflated prices) to work their patch and come back to us later when they had had earned their wage and the Yanks had to leave.
- 2. Americans were issued with a small glossy booklet describing places of interest to visit and places to eat whilst in HK. But at the back was advice given officially "Not to pick fights with British Servicemen.....

wait for itBecause they are too tough". The advice would have been sensible had it not been for the fact that the booklets were in common circulation amongst Brits in HK too.

- 3. One night ashore with Hank and Dickie, on our way back to the ship I said I wanted to purchase some mucky pictures and Dickie was up for it too. Hank would have none of it as it was not safe but we went ahead anyway and asked a tout where we could get some. He invited us to follow him away from the main street (and lights) and down a side street and then down yet another leading further away still. He disappeared into a building and returned with a pack of pictures the size of playing-cards. They were poor quality, black and white photos but they were novel to acquire so I set about haggling over the price. The vendor became aggressive and I was determined to 'get a bargain' ignoring the fact that several characters were emerging from the gloom and approaching us. A deal was struck and the money changed hands and I became very focussed on wanting to make my way back to the main street. Five or six Chinese men were around us now when, Dickie said he wanted to buy a set of pictures too. I said as persuasively as I could without wishing to show fear; that we were going back. We made our way whilst being taunted and invited to fight. We turned the first corner and I could see the lights ahead. The Chinese continued to follow taunt and then began to prod and tug us. Had they wished they could have orchestrated violence but they didn't? We finally arrived on the 'street' when they melted away and where Hank was still waiting (with little sympathy for our experience).
- The sad and unsavoury aspect of the sex-trade which existed in the Far-East; that of children being 4. drawn or forced into sex for money first became apparent whilst in HK. One evening walking in daylight into town from the dockyard, we were hailed by a Chinese woman who had with her a child of perhaps 5-7 years old who she offered to us. This was not some 'Brassy' promotion of a bargain being offered the way 'street girls might advertise their wares. The whole demeanour of the woman and the way she spoke was more by way of imploring (or begging) for us to take-up her offer. We told her to 'Piss-off' and to take the little girl home. Strangely (now looking back) it was not a source of disgust to us; more a sense of incredulity that anyone would consider offering or wishing to take up the offer. But that was 1968 and this is now 2010 and how sadly we can reflect on or feel anger about the implications of that trade or the criminal activity associated with it. When we were returning to the ship much later on we came upon the woman and her child sitting on the pavement with an American sailor in the his 'Whites' tropical uniform sitting beside the child with his hand up the skirt of the child. This was the world of poverty in the Far-East and along with bodies floating in monsoon ditches and sharing taxis with people carrying a chicken, we did not react to the situation as one reading this might expect. The child might be earning the money that would buy food for that family group. However my attitude and my already low opinion of American servicemen plunged to a new low.

People used as a commodity:

This is an appropriate place to add that in Singapore I saw a child without hands begging on the street with a mug held to his chest by the stumps. When I was back aboard and mentioned this I was told that if the child had been destined to be used for begging purposes then by amputating his hands he would have considerably greater impact on a sympathetic or even a hardened cynical passer-by on the street.

Wednesday 03-12-68

On the Wednesday (3rd Dec) I paid a visit, with Hank, to a bar, 'Kings Bar' where the beer was only HK\$ 1 a glass compared with prices ranging up to HK\$ 3.50 for the same stuff elsewhere. Incidentally we had to haggle over the price if we wanted lime or lemon tops. In there an old 'Boot' came and sat next to us and started talking. She read our fortunes for us. Told me correctly how many brother and sisters I had, then told me two were married and that the youngest – meaning Frances, would be marrying very soon? She went on to say I had a girl-friend at home; that could only be Helen at the moment, who she claimed was a Cherry-Girl (a name meaning virgin – to lose ones cherry is to lose ones virginity) and liked me very much because I was (in the cards) the Jack of Hearts which meant I had a good heart – Well she couldn't be right all the time, I suppose. A funny thing though, was that when she held out the cards for me to 'cut' it was the Jack of Hearts – again, that turned up.

Thursday 04-12-68

Thursday I met a Chinese lass, Anna Tang who I invited to come aboard on Friday to look around the ship.

Friday 05-12-68

Friday morning my 'piles' which have been bothering me all week started playing-up and I went up to the Sick-Bay. I had to have an immediate operation. Could they be really that bad? And I was 'turned-in'.

I arranged with the Doctor to let Anna come down and see me but in the afternoon things became difficult; guests couldn't come aboard until 16.30 and she had to be back, ready to work in the 'Washington Bar' by 18.00.

Hong Kong continued

Whilst here I bought for myself a gold signet-ring and a Mah-Jong gambling set which is played all over Honkers, 24 hrs a day. We could walk down a street and if we were to stop, from somewhere we would be able to hear the clacking and knocking of the plastic cubes. The game is similar to dominoes except only 4 play; you collect pieces to form sets and there are 136 cubes.

Whilst I was here I got letters from everyone at home

One night, PISSED, Hank came back on board, climbed into his top-bunk, leaned over to tell me his Aussie photos had turned out well and the next moment he was looking up at me. He had fallen a good 6 ft. He said, scratching his back "What am I doing down here" and then carried on telling me about the photos.

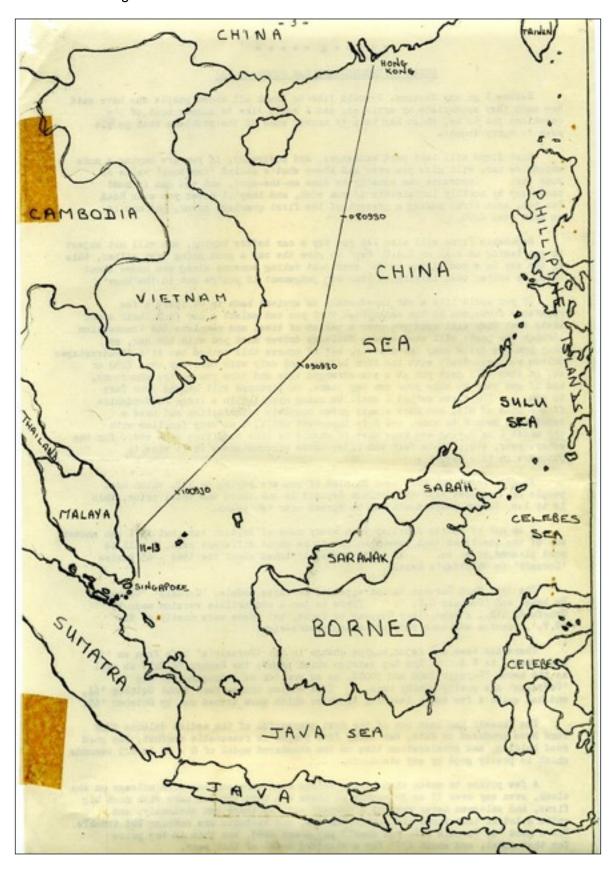
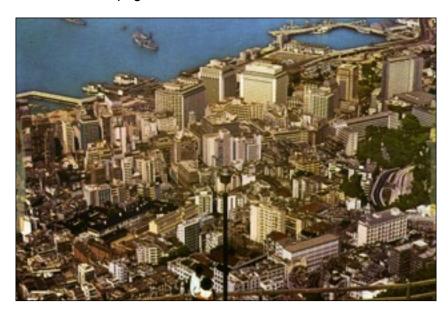
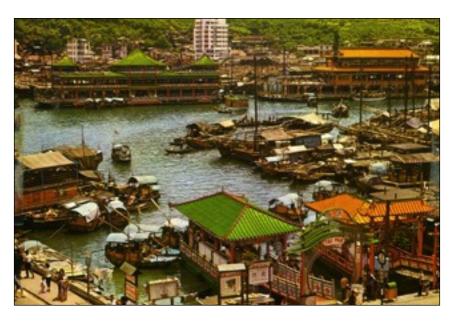


Chart of planned route to Singapore (hinged on page)



Hong Kong -Central Town from the Peak

Visible is the Aircraft Carriers berth at HMS Tamar and also the Hong Kong Hilton (the tall building on the far right)





 100^{th} of 1/5d We never found anything to use these on. The chogies do though.

The exchange was 1/5d to HK\$1

Today decimal rate 1/5d = 7p (new pence)

The note value is 0.07p

Saturday 07-12-68

page 146

Back to sea again and commencing passage to the Singapore areas. Mail from Helen is getting quite regular now. Life in the Sick-Bay is not bad but it is a bit trying. Moving about is possible but only with a lot of effort. A film show was put on for us tonight.

Sunday 08-12-68

page 146

Breakfast in bed, dinner in bed; visit from the RC sky-pilot, visit from the DO, visit from the Doc' to say "I've to get out of bed" – "Thank God", and two hot baths a day.

No more mail for us until the 10th.

Monday 09-12-68

page 146

Was allowed; at long last, out of bed before dinner. No more meals laid on for me. – More on credit side!

Tuesday 10-12-68

page 146

As an 'up-patient' I can move about a bit more freely though I am a little sore. On my first day in had a book of mine I removed from my bed while I was sleeping. A pretty low trick considering that I would gladly pass it on after finishing it. As it was it was never returned so a vicious circle started – only treble-fold and I helped myself to 3 books (good ones from the library of the Sick-Bay).

Helen has written every day lately; she seems to be a good kid and is badgering me into coming up to 'Abers' (*Aberdeen*) when I get back. Why not!

Sick Bay was a good opportunity for me to catch-up with writing to friends and relatives.

It has been very fine weather of late and the flight-deck workers are becoming bronzed again.

Wednesday 11-12-68

page 146

An old civilian was transferred from us to the *RFA Olna* today; he was in Sick-Bay when I turned-to this morning. All he did was drink water.

I'm right 'cheesed-off' today with everything and not really understanding why. Because of that I never wrote any letters tonight; to H. ie.

Was paid today Singapore S\$110 though we are still on H.K rate of LOA (Hong Kong rate of Local Overseas Allowance) It's only £12. 10s, but I get paid again in 8 days time. We are going to live in Terror for 3 weeks.

Thursday and Friday: no journal entries and I have no recollection of any activity prior to our entry to Singapore.

Saturday 14-12-68

page 146

Arrived in Singapore and berthed along-side wharf 13; same as our last visit. We are positioned such that the angle-deck is jutting over the jetty; preventing the use of the dockyard cranes which move on rails, parallel to the wharf-side. Every stores item has to be 'humped' aboard.

Thursday 19-12-68

page 147

Singas

Myself with Jim and a few Sqdn lads were driven out to *RAF Changi* to take our PPE. (*Pre-Professional Exam*) I know I passed mine; it was a cinch. We had our dinner over there. The RAF boys have a separate dining hall for each course. There is a fantastic range of meals laid out. Steaks and omelettes are cooked to requirements. To cap it all the RIFF-RAF drip about the food. They wouldn't last a week on board.

2010 look-back: I remember being wowed by the dining arrangements and that there was nothing in place to stop us going round for another meal. I had an omelette and once seated was amazed to overhear RAF staff complaining about the peas on their plates. We went and had a steak at the steak-bar and not wishing to miss out on the experience I went and had a Chinese main course and that was a pre-cursor to going to the bar for a beer.

The Changi Club is open all day so we went and celebrated (the exam being over). A couple of the lads drank more than their bladders would hold and on the outskirts of Changi village one stood up in the back of the truck and regardless of the traffic (whilst hanging on to the paulin frame with one hand and facing aft), relieved himself.JACK!!

Friday 20-12-68

page 147

The mess moved over to HMS Terror

Make and Mends, most days. (We worked a 'tropical routine' 07.30 -12.00). Little changes in Singapore; a load of new International Hotels are being built along Orchard Road including Singa's first HILTON Hotel. When we leave, Singas will depend a great deal upon tourism from, Japan, UK, America and Australia too.

There is another break in the Journal until we sailed on 13th Jan 1969. Life was great for a teenage serviceman even on the low wages of an Able-Rate, NAM (O) 1. We were billeted about six to a mess; around the parade ground of HMS Terror.

Purchase of camera

I wanted to purchase a good quality camera whilst in the Far-East and I wanted a bargain. An opportunity presented itself when the ship's company was billeted ashore at HMS Terror. There was a shop on the base which I visited and after getting the proprietor to bring down one camera after another to demonstrate its features and benefits I found myself taken by a. Konica EE-matic 35mm, which had automatic focus and aperture timing as well as the usual manual settings. I asked for the best price, gave him a look of disbelief then offered him a ridiculous price, agreed to disagree and left him gathering up his cameras to place back on their respective shelves. I waited a few days and returned to look over the different cameras once again. We repeated the same charade arriving back at the same camera and then proceeded with him offering his lower price and me walking away. The next time I visited I showed I was genuinely interested in the other cameras and their features, but left without making any offers or even looking at the Konica. My fourth and last visit went through the original procedure arriving back at the Konica and after handling it with a real punters appetite, the shop keeper said in a voice of exasperation "Ok Ok I let you have this at very special price and you no more touch all cameras" The price was the equivalent of UK £15 and I had done my homework to know this camera would cost me £45 back home. A deal was struck and though people with more money to spend could buy Yashica Single Lens Reflex [SLR] cameras and other cameras such as Nikon I was delighted with my purchase. It continued to serve me well for twenty years.

On the ground floor was a book seller and during my time I purchased and read James Clavell's novels of the Far-East (Tai-Pan series and King Rat), The World of Suzie Wong, The Red Sailor; all stories of life in the orient. Mornings were spent in the AED workshop. At stand-easy a Chinaman arrived on the dock-side selling flavoured, re-constituted milk which was sold in plastic bags; very popular with us. We could spend

our afternoons as we wished and the swimming pool was also popular. Whilst there Dave Simkins declared he was having a bad time and was distraught with the news that the pop singer Lulu had married Maurice Gibb (of the Bee Gees) and he never wanted to listen to Lulu again: as a result of which I gained an LP of Lulu's hit songs.

In the messes we had no air-conditioning, but a couple of large bladed ceiling fans. At night we would often get a visit from a flying 'armoured beetle' which flew around the room making a noise like a distant motor bike. It was time to pull a sheet over oneself as the beetle invariably flew into the fan with a 'THWACK'! and would land anywhere. It would be quiet for some time then as if shaking off concussion the bug would rise and take to the air again.

Earlier in the Journal I referred to fun to be had by misbehaving with Chinese fireworks. To put in perspective the real danger and power of these devices; I was to witness another event with an unpleasant ending. Whilst billeted in HMS Terror I was approaching the ablutions when some of the killicks [Leading Hands] were just arriving back from ashore, in very high spirits. The ablutions were a wash-room with a large circular sink for communal use and Jan Loft, our senior Mess killick was stripped and washing himself. Around the mess-decks were waste-bins [we called spitkids from spitoons]. These were made of a very heavy gauge alloy, shaped similarly to a waisted lead-pellet; as used in air guns. The killicks lit a cracker and rushing in to the wash-room placed the firework on the floor close to Jan and placed such a spitkid over the top of it. In an instant realisation of what was about to happen, Jan launched himself at the exit door. Unfortunately for him the perpetrators' anticipating his action put their weight against the door to hold it and he put both arms through the glass panes causing massive lacerations and a lot of blood loss. The fire cracker exploded behind him and being contained in the heavy waste bin the explosive force was magnified, and it lifted the bin with such force as to force it into the plaster ceiling before dropping to the floor again. The effect and damage was not seen till the next day as Jan's condition demanded all the attention to get him medical aid and fast.

For 5 cents we could catch a bus into the city. Returning from Singapore after midnight by taxi you could ask the taxi to stop in Nee-Soon village in pitch black and by calling for an 'egg banjo' a light would appear almost instantly as a lamp was lit on a food stall and the owner would flash up his 'wok' and take the order.

I bought a Hi-Fi record player with twin speakers, for myself and a pair of binoculars which I took home for my parents to replace the aged ones they had at home. These items seemed a luxury which I would not have considered buying in the UK on my wages.

In Sembawang Village was a small outdoor food stall with tables, which we frequently visited; run by a Chinese couple who always made us very welcome and who, as Xmas approached invited me and Hank to go to for a meal 'on the house'. I had developed a love of the Chinese food and was looking forward to their hospitality. Imagine my surprise [not shown] when we sat down and they served-up roast turkey and vegetables to match a typical English Xmas dinner. They ran the stall during the day and overnight the husband worked in a hotel in the city. That work ethic was directed in an aspiration to raise enough money to be owners of their own restaurant one day.

I had quite a few late evenings in Singapore City, usually starting at the Oriental Bar which was located in a dimly lit street quite close by the Brit Club. In all my time I never visited Raffles the very up market meeting place frequented by those who had to comply with a strict dress-code.

During this prolonged period here I visited Johore Bahru on the other side of 'The Causeway' on the Malay mainland. We visited an interesting house of entertainment named 'Tokyo by Night'. We sat with a couple of the working girls and had a glass of Tiger beer; mine introduced herself as Lucy Cheu and to ensure no misunderstanding she stated "Lucy Cheu, No Chew". I explained that I had very little money left. My mate with me asked if I had a condom to let him have, which I did, though it was the only one I had. In response to Lucy enticing me go with her to a cubicle for a "velly good massage and a special" I asked if we could dispense with the massage and just have a special. She was older than me with a kindly self-assured manner and she took the lead; taking me by the hand to the cubicle. Business must have been quiet as she

said for the, genuinely little money I had she wanted me to have the massage as well. We stripped-off and I was given a massage which included her walking barefoot up and down my back. It was an amazing experience for me. Ironically a few days later my mate told me he had 'caught the boat-up'.

Many years later talking with my father, he told me he "never went swimming with an overcoat on". It was an obtuse way of telling me that he never used a condom. I guess I was unwittingly following in his manner. I was not wise; just very lucky.

I recall dining out in Bhugis St; on a dish of 'crab and asparagus' which, after pusser's food was truly exotic.

New Years Eve found me in Singapore City with no money. Wendy bought me rum and coke which was a real reversal of roles; [bar girl buys customer drinks]. I was outside the Brit Club at about midnight and hopped on a Pusser's bus going back to Sembawang and a guy from the ship who had a bottle of rum (was there ever a brand called Lemon Heart Rum?). Anyway he shared the bottle and we wished each other 'Bloody Happy New Year'

Monday 13-01-69 page 147

We sailed this morning at 09.00. I had a 'hooched' night last night and had very little to eat since dinner-time. I felt sick and had to Line the Deck, got giddy and came down looking real 'mooney' (white-man!).

My place of work is on the Last Minute Negatives station doing alternate shifts with Dolly (*Fred Gray*). It's a good number. I sat in the caboose wondering: would the guns would fire, would the cartridges 'jam', would I have time to fit new cartridges before the next A/C came down etc. etc. The very first A/C to attempt a 'hook-on' was a 'bolter' and the guns fired, they didn't jam, and I managed to re-load with ample time. The first of my fears over.

We work: 6hrs on, - 6hrs off, 12hrs on, - 6hrs off, 6hrs on, - 12hrs off. 18 hours one day, followed by 6 hours the next. When there is no flying on we work as Sqdn (O)'s for 849.

In Terror (not literally) I bought a camera worth; £44 in the UK; my complete wage almost blown. Then on board I put down my first of two payments on a Parker 61, fountain pen, from the NAFFI.

This time in harbour, Hank gave away his wedding photos; not sure who he gave them to, then lost his wedding ring over New Year. Now he has a picture of the Hermes above his bunk *Comment in journal* Anchor faced

<u>Tuesday 14-01-69</u> page 148

We're back in the WRNS quarters! The same stupid problem arises every other night; over the SRE. The other night we allowed the SRE to be switched off so the 'OTHER-SIDE' could listen to their tape recorder, tonight we wanted to play LP's and THEY, kicked up a racket and wished to keep the radio playing – stupid damn awkwardness. This means tomorrow night or any other when the PEON's next door want the SRE down or off we will, for sake of face and equal badness will turn it up even if it makes it noisy for us. The next move is theirs when we want it down, they will put it up and there will be claims by both sides to rip the wires out (just threats). I would like to see the SRE moved to the far end of the mess.

A chockhead came around tonight taking negatives for printing; at 6d a print post-card size. He will print 'porn' for those inclined that way – KINKY.

Wednesday 15-01-69 page 148

Did 3hrs work today. Easy! Played volley ball for AED against 893 grunters and won 15 - 8; a cinch! We were playing in the aft lift well and the PIGS kept serving to our man who had his eyes to the sun. Dolly couldn't see the ball so I ran in to help; got caught by the sun and ran into the side of the lift-well. I did a Yogi Bear 'spesh in mid-air with my legs still going then slid down the side.

For the first time on this commission I went up for musical PT. - Doing exercises in time with the Marines Band. Tonight I went up the seat-shop with Gusty (*OEM Chris Blowers*) to do keep-fit exercises. This exercise is because I've been asked to do a X-country race when I get back to Singas.

From Singas we sailed up the Malacca Sts to the, Penang Sea Exercise Areas and have been steaming in a box using RAAF Butterworth as a diversion airfield.

Helen has sent me a photo out; not a bad looking lass!

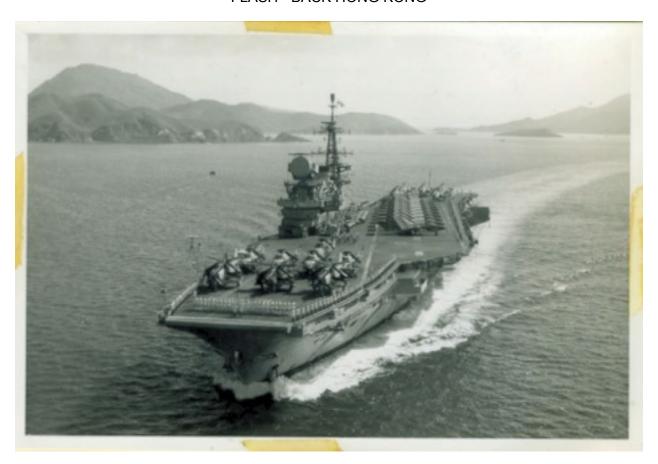
<u>Thursday 16-01-69</u> page 148

Admiral Fell came aboard by RAF Whirlwind, chopper to observe our exercise



Westland Whirlwind

FLASH - BACK HONG KONG



HMS Hermes entering Hong Kong

Entering through the many islands inhabited by small fishing communities. On one island stands a Buddist temple.



HMS Hermes berthed alongside.

On the far side is: Kowloon and the Chinese mainland. All the vessels in view are warships



HMS Hermes berthed in Hong Kong (Nov 1968)

The dockyard buildings to the right form *HMS Tamar*

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HMS Tamar & Central Hong Kong by night

Friday 17-01-69

page 150

The exercise started early this morning ie. The preparations did. I was in bed by 02.00 this morning, back out at 06.40 and worked through until 18.00 tonight with only half hour for dinner.

The Bucc's dropped 103 of 104 bombs. This says a great deal for workshop servicing of Stores Release Equipment. Much credit will go to the arming parties. It was a field-day on the roof, for the Armourers; red and black surcoats everywhere and the Gunners Party put in the most hours.

In this one exercise, more bombs have been used by 801 Sqdn than was used by 800 Sqdn over the whole of its last commish.

We have two WRNS aboard; typists to be used in the enquiry over the 21 *(that is twenty-one)* torpedoes which were made U/S, in manhandling them over the gang-plank in Singas. The Jenny's have two guards with them wherever they go..... -..... almost everywhere and I suppose it is understandable.

Refer journal page 146 Port-side-to, on wharf 13 and unable to utilise the dockyard crane

<u>Saturday 18-01-69</u> page 150

The two Jennies were flown back to the mainland by COD. Flying tonight was cancelled due to persistent electrical storms. They are lightning storms; both, sheet and forked, but there is no thunder heard and usually no rain either.

THE MIND BOGGLES



As Judge; in a beauty contest I'd pick the dog Aren't they all ESSENCE? (Ropey Trophy material)

Sunday – Thursday 23-01-69 page 151

The only thing that hasn't been dull around here is the weather. On-watch, Off-watch, back On-watch. I'm a sitting sentinel watching the pistols. 849 flew off today (Thurs) and won't be back until Monday. I'm building-up a good tan between land-ons and take-offs.

<u>Friday 24-01-69</u> page 151

Had a large RAS today; fuel, stores and armament. The sea-boats have each had their tarpaulins removed and we are headed for Langkawi. My name is down to be put ashore by the 12.00 'Pinnace' tomorrow. Had another letter from Helen – and another fortnight gap since the last. I'll 'give her ROCK's'.

<u>Saturday</u> 25-10-69 page 151

We anchored on the same spot as last time and the ship's routine is being run from the bridge now. Hardly slept last night; kept getting-up and wandering around the boat-deck until 03.00 this morning. Bought 35mm colour film from the 'Naffs' to take ashore and take some pic's.

Page 152

We arrived back from the island at 16.30. I went there with Jim (Henderson) and Mustapha (NAM (O) Lander). We were the first three off the boat. This time we each had cameras with us so we jumped (as opposed to pushing each other) into the 'Ogg'; up to our waists. We went up the beach, laid down our gear and hung-up our wet garments over bushes. In this heat it takes no time at all to dry clothes. I threw my shorts into a bush, startling a grasshopper which jumped out in my direction. It was shiny green and about 4" long. Its colour mingled with the grass well so it was impossible to photograph it. When Mustapha touched it with a stick; in a hope to move it onto the sand, it leaped-off, into taller grass. It was the last we saw of it or any other insects that day. We saw two of the islanders over in the paddy-fields (the crops have been cut since we were last here) so we went over to them, to have a few laughs. They had a bag full of bananas which we bartered for with Jim's fags. I asked them, "Are you savages"? They grinned, nodded and chuckled, showing rotten teeth - what was left in their mouths. I believe Hooch is made on the island and the natives asked us to go over the hill but we were called back to the beach (by the Patrol) and told to stay there. We wandered along the beach around to the next bay where we found a dozen oxen fenced in just off from the beach.

Mick (*Martin Rodgers*) turned up on the next liberty boat. We went flipper swimming across the bay and back; took a few photos and headed up the hill where we met the Chogie 'cobblers' who showed us a well (fresh water). Then we ran to the top for more 'photies'; ran back down again and met the Chogie tailors who wanted their picture taken.

<u>Sunday 26-01-69</u> page 152

Sunday harbour routine. I never went ashore but I, Mick, Jim, Dolly and a couple of AED lads, had a Volley Ball challenge match against 849; we threw the challenge and lost. We were originally playing 3-way; 849 took the first two games so we asked; demanded the game become 5-way – HOPELESS! We will challenge them again, no doubt – Grammar at 20 paces, p'haps. It was red-hot on deck; my feet were burning through my gym-shoes and even with a T-shirt on I may yet peel (too much sun whilst on Langkawi). While we were playing a 'pipe' was made; "You are reminded that the flight-deck aft of the lift-well is reserved for officers (Pigs & Grunters) only". We all jeered and shouted a few "Rhubarbs" and in seconds the flight-deck (the hands) was hissing and giving a collection of 'Raspberries'. That was one hell of a laugh; at the 'pigs' expense.

My name is down for the proposed Harriers team representing 'Hermes' in the RN X-country Championships being run over a four and a half mile course at Simbang, Singas on Feb 10^{th.} The race will be between all Far-East committed ships which can be available on that date. We on a 'carrier' should put up a good-show as we have more space (the roof), for training on. Sub Lt Humphrey's is taking charge of the organisation – supposedly, but he's graunched his foot and so PO Dolly Gray is taking us for training. "Boy is he a worker"? We sweated like hell tonight. He made us hop around the flight-deck after doing numerous leg-killing exercises. Correction: Not 'made us' - it's all voluntary stuff.

Wrote five pages of: unadulterated, unabridged, nonsensical, sweetness to, Helen last night. I've got to 'watch-it'. I don't intend pushing her too fast. She is a great kid just growing up and everyone grows fast enough without being pulled along at a breakneck speed.

It's a fortnight since I last tasted beer – great! And I've to stay off it until after the race which means that the first two days in Singas will be Coke runs up the Oriental. The lasses there are used to seeing me alternating between; beer, rum and coke one night and Coke-neaters, dressed up with the usual ice cubes and sliced lemon, the next. Last time in Pauline said "For shame Keet" when I ordered coke – less rum.

I stopped going in there after New Year's Day, because the girls were getting through more drink than we were. When I approached, Wendy (her own name is Susan) in the back, she fell over; nearly cracking her head open on a table top. I took her back to my table with her trying to convince me she had been drinking only orange juice. I was a bit annoyed with them all for sprawling over everyone and everything. Next thing was P (*Pauline*) cussing and I left them saying I wouldn't go back for the rest of our 'stay'. Hank went up and they told him they thought me very stubborn. "Yes I agree"! I'm going to see Wendy again though this next visit; as this may be my last visit to Singapore, ever. (I hope not – even if the next visit is as a Civvy; and that is a thought?).

We are operating off Penang Pulua again and tomorrow morning 801 will be using HE 2"cont 154

Page 154

2" rockets fitted with High Explosive warheads.....to be fired at the towed-astern, 'splash-target', so I must take my camera with me when I go on watch. I was very lucky that we had no 'Bolters' this afternoon. When I went out to change the barrels from 'day' 1 ½" to 'night' 1" I found the securing pin shaken-out. If the guns had been fired the barrel would have been propelled about fifty feet from the port-side. It happened before when Stocker's (*Kev Stockdale*) was on LMN's.

<u>Tuesday 28-01-69</u> page 154

Dave got a 'shitty' on today as his redundancy form was turned down, after Dolly and I, teasing, told him we were 'out'.

Just a wind-up as the following letter, returned to me shows: (note the curt use of the surname)

STAFF IN CONFIDENCE



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (NAVY)
Naval Manpower Department
Redundancy Co-Ordination Office
Old Admirelty Building
Whitehall
LONDON S.W.1.

Telephone: 01-930 9000 Ext 80

2 2 JAN 1969

May Collect.

I am writing to tell you that it has not been found possible to approve your application to volunteer for early discharge under the redundancy terms given in DCI 1187/68 because there were too many applications for the first phase redundancy.

2. There may, of course, be another opportunity to volunteer when applications for the second phase redundancy are called for. Details of those eligible for this second phase will be published in due course and, if you are eligible, you should then re-apply if you wish.

Yours sincerely,

(E.d. STEARNS) Commander Royal Navy

So much for my hopes of becoming a civvy, early on 1970

Page 155



We had to cancel some take-offs this morning as we ran out of head-wind.

I was 'right chocker' at learning my redundancy had been turned down. I hadn't banked on it but it does set me back (again Navy-wise) as the only clear way out now is by purchase; after serving $2/3^{rd}$ of my 'manstime; which takes me to my 24^{th} birthday. I believe those who have obtained their 'tickets' are (in MOD's opinion) undesirable which means each rating who volunteered for redundancy has had his 'Doc's' scrutinized for worthiness. Being a 'good-hand' is no consolation right now; as the General Election changes policy between this redundant lot and the next; proposed in 1973. And if new aircraft-carriers are bought from 'Uncle Sam's' boys there will be a full continuance of the FAA; (with a difference – less bombheads). We are here to teach newly recruited 'greenies': Armament, Procedure, Documentation, Administration, - everything to do with the Ordnance world; then we will be kicked-out as 'Services No Longer Required (SNLR)

Mick's redundancy has been accepted – Jam! He and Jim had bet their fortnights wages on 'Their Lord's' decision – Jim lost the bet but not his money; Mick will not take it, for keeps.

I had a letter from home – mail strike in the offing. B.............. Postal workers - this and any slackness in the previous weeks could explain why my letters (and I've written to everyone; but everyone I know) are not being answered.



Regent's Helo bringing HMS Cleopatra's Wasp

I acquired a set of photos from the 1967 Torrey Canyon disaster. I was just 17 years and Hawker Hunter jets from my squadron, 764 at RNAS Lossiemouth flew missions to bomb and ignite the ship.



1) She came to a grinding halt. Under observation by helos from *HMS Albion*



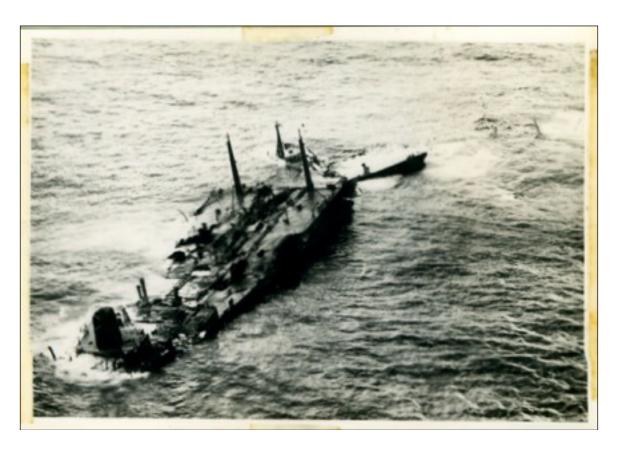
2) Her back is broken



3) The tide's at work - moving the oil-slick. Message sent to Lossiemouth -Require Buccaneers using 1000lb bombs to break-open the compartments.



4) The work of the bombs and the oil fired by Napalm dropped by RAF Hunters She was 974.4 feet (297.0 m) long, 125.4 feet (38.2 m) beam and 68.7 feet (20.9 m) draught



5) The remains of the burnt-out wreck

Torrey Canyon Disaster

On 18 March, 1967 the Torrey Canyon supertanker struck Pollard's Rock between the Scilly Isles and Land's End. 31,000,000 gallons of oil leaked and spread along the sea between England and France. She was en-route from the Canaries to Milford Haven and should have passed to the west of the Scillies. Striking the rocks at 17 knots she ripped open 6 compartments.

The massive oil slick killed most of the marine life it touched along the whole of the south coast of Britain and the Normandy shores of France. It subsequently blighted the region for many years thereafter.

Unsuccessful attempts were made to float the ship off the reef, and one member of the Dutch salvage team was killed. The ship broke apart after being stranded on the reef for several days.

On Tuesday 28th March 1967 (my birthday) the Fleet Air Arm sent Blackburn Buccaneer planes from Lossiemouth to drop forty-two 1,000lb bombs on the ship. Then Royal Air Force sent Hawker Hunter jets to drop cans of aviation fuel to make the oil blaze. However, exceptionally high tides had put the blaze out and it took further attacks by Sea Vixens from the Naval Air Station at Yeovilton and Buccaneers from the Naval Air Station at Brawdy as well as more RAF Hunters with napalm to ignite the oil. Attempts to use foam booms to contain the oil were of limited success due to their fragility in high seas.

Although the operation was declared a success, the Navy came in for some criticism for months as around a quarter of the 42 bombs dropped on the stationary target failed to hit it.

Thursday 30-01-69 page 159

Long day today. Was ready for bed and I don't recall much happening – exciting during climbing out and falling in.

<u>Friday 31-01-69</u> page 159

03.00 We anchored off Langkawi. I filled-in my leave request, for 2nd leave. Not had an answer from Helen so I had to use Jean's address for the form. This afternoon I received letters from Mum (Had I wanted her to pay £4 for my course?), from Paul Taylor; my old oppo' from Ganges; he is getting married on March 1st this year, to a Scots lassie. Lastly, a received a letter from Helen.

Paul Taylor: NAM (AE) who converted later to Leading Regulator

My course: I enrolled at Aldermaston Court, Reading, for a correspondence course in Computing, O-level Logic and A-level maths; in preparation for civvy street.

<u>Saturday 01-02-69</u> page 159

The first day of the second month. Still at anchor off Langkawi. I was Beach Patrol with four other lads. We went ashore by Pinnace at 12.00 and never got back till 18.45 – starved! With a bit of forethought the CPO arranged for us to have 5 Galls of Limers with us. We eventually (I) gave the remaining Limers to the locals in the hope that we could get a couple of bottles cheap. The rogues still wanted 50c though.

All in all, a good day on the island. I and a chockhead (I found out he was the driver who forced me off the road of the Peak – HK.) went inland – village direction, wearing our Naval Patrol armbands. They were our authority to "Go Anywhere".

Had a can of Tiger beer– first in half a month – flat, warm Yech!

Sunday 02-02-69

page 160

Slept in until 09.15 (civilised time to wake up) 6 hours in the sun yesterday is telling on me. My neck creases when I bend. "It's all in the mind".

Our Vixens went chasing Mirages this afternoon and the belly of the fuselage of one was ripped away due to excessive G-force. All Vixens were subsequently grounded.

The COD + mail was put on the side-lift following a land on and the engine caught fire at the hangar level.

The chockheads topped the cab up with foam compound and then sprayed the mainplane, the wing-stubs, fuselage and almost everything else including the mail-pods.

The foam compound was made up of dried blood which made a hell of a mess to clean-up.



George (Scouse) and myself in the Caboose

REM(A) George Lacey



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Me, Dave & Paul in The Caboose

NAM(O) Dave Simkins and OEM(A) Paul Cox

Monday 03-02-69

page 162

Up at 05.15 for flying stations. Vixens are still grounded.

The Albion is operating in the area and sent 3 helos over this morning to pick-up FO2

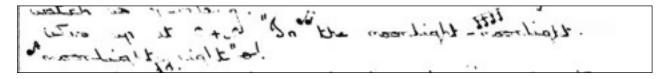
We are the 'goodies' (as the Herald puts it); Blue Force opposing 'baddies' Orange Force. No matter how many times we or the enemy is sunk we never sink and are always re-incarnated. The supposed 'Cruiser' we are up against is represented by *Cleopatra*; a frigate.

Was asked up to the PO's Mess, for 'neaters' by PO Farr just for lending him a book.

Tuesday 04-02-69

page 162

CNS Thanabalasingam came aboard today to watch us operating



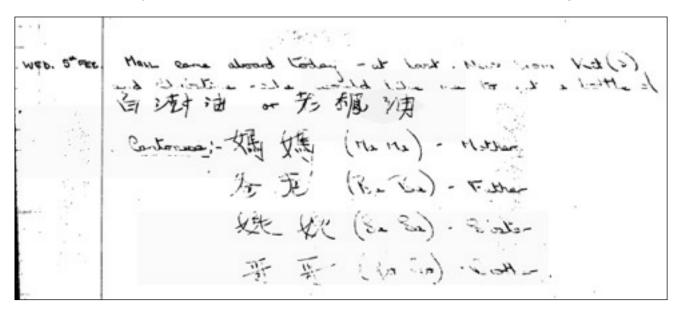
Was up at 04.30 "In the moonlight, moonlight moonlight night".

Was training in the seat-shop 40mins - sweating. Dickie Bird came along to join in but packed in 5mins later.

My drafting order is through – HMS Goldcrest – Brawdy, South Wales "Yere Bach! Hold these two sheep for me while I count them"

Was up the school-room and found I had achieved an HET pass in GCE (O-Level) General Paper. Not bad considering I did no revision; just turned up at the classroom and sat down for 3hrs writing. O-level Logic & A-level Maths is wardroom material (if I was so inclined).

Mail came aboard today – at last News from Kit (S) and Christine. She would like me to get a bottle of:



My reply to S.O.C. is away and about a week from now I should have my first lesson to start on. 'Am really looking forward to it now; £29 worth of it. With joss on my side I will be settled in a career by the time I'm about 30 years old. I don't much like the idea of working with my hands once I'm out of this environment.

The barber was making fun of the guy's bald top. He rubbed his hand over it and said, "Gee, you know, it feels just like my wife's bottom". Baldie rubbed his hand over it and 'cracked', "Gee, it sure does, doesn't it?"



Hank, Spud (in corner left) and Paul playing 'Mah-Jong'

NAM(O) Mick Hancock, OEM(A) Murphy and OEM(A) Paul Cox

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In training for the 'PEAK' 10yds ahead of Lt Penfold (DO)

Thursday 06-02-69

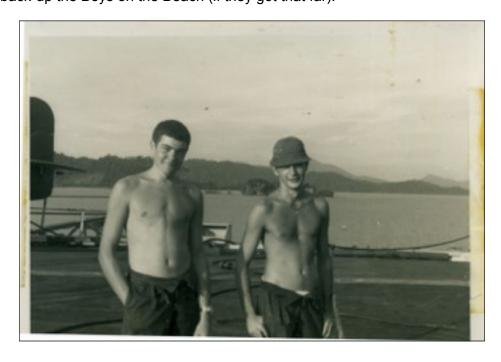
page 164

Seen, Dolly Gray (PO) who says I'm a likely cert for the X-country team.

I've heard from the schoolie - Awarded HET in General Paper.

Saw Lt (Wiggy) Bennett (DO). Awarded a, Good-Pass in my PPE.

The Sea-Soldiers; as the papers call Commandos, launched an attack on Penang Island; being held by Ghurkas. Apparently new tactics are being used; for Bucc's were continually scrambled this afternoon at 10 min alert to back-up the Boys on the Beach (if they got that far).



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The last day of FOTEX, Phases I and II complete for this afternoon.

We enter Singas tomorrow morning along with, God knows how many other boats. Dolly and I will be put back onto ships watches. I've 'rabbits' to buy for the family, my own rabbits: a dress for Christine (Hanks missus) then I've to perpetrate the Oriental completely "T", (Things go bloody-well better with bloody Coke a Cola) "Huh"!

21.00 the COD had to be launched with a compassionate case. I went up to prepare the LMN's in the event of any malfunction after take-off, but the chockheads have arranged the Vixens the full length of the angle. If the COD had gone wrong it would take less time for it to fly to, Butterworth or Changi than to wait for the F/D to be re-arranged.

Saturday 08-02-69

We arrived alongside at 07.30 this morning. I went into Sembawang and bought a dress, then without any thought beforehand I purchased a stereo record-player. I was with Dave looking around a phonogram shop and we just happened upon this record-player, \$90 I paid for it. I had it demonstrated there in the shop. That was the first part of the day over; we came back on board for supper after which Hank and I went into the city. But what a night it turned into. We went in on the KOM TAY YAT transport bus from Semba's, to the Brit Club. We had a couple of Lemon-tops then about 22.15 I left for, Seah Street.





Still lapping the deck; breathing coming hard and Ozzie coming behind and Thomo – a stoker.



The parade ground HMS Terror

I sat down in the 'Oriental' with Wendy for quite a while. When Hank came in; did a pirouette in front of us then putting his hand to his heart and imitating Wendy's voice said, "Ooh Wendy!, Ooh Keet!" Wendy got up and said she wanted to go home........ alone.

Hank ordered water with ice and collapsed in a chair head-down. Rick a guy introduced to me tonight, from 893 turned up chuntering about being left behind.

After looking around, (Ami still drinking heavily, looks 30yrs old). Elizabeth looks junked up and Pauline is putting age-on, prematurely. We decide to try Bhugis St. I tried shaking Hank - no joy, lifted his head up by his hair then dropped it on the table-top. Still no joy so Rick and I left. (I was conned for the bill - 2 cokes & 1 glass of water).

We joined a couple of other lads at a table and ordered bottled Tiger. After this the whole run ashore turned "God Awful". These other lads at the table were OD type O.D's who sat arguing over their beer disappearing. They wanted to fight until one of them decided to do, "This Old Hat of Mine". I showed him how to get on top of the Gents. He had an audience of a few hundred people as he stripped every stitch of clothing. The European women enjoyed it as much as anyone. At just 03.00 we agreed to leave and went across the intersection for the taxi. We were arguing over the fare when I pulled my hand out of my pocket and a \$10 bill fell out. I went to pick it up and he accused me of taking it off him. In Bhugis St. one way of pick-pocketing is to flick your hand in and out of a pocket so that the money falls on the deck. Then let other people see you pick it up making it look like a lucky find. After a series of events including threats and oaths the Chogie put his hands on me so I clenched my hand around his throat, lifted him up and put his feet back on a different spot. He continued to chunter so with my hands on my pockets I walked back into the table area. He followed me and when I turned around he had half a dozen "friends" with him. There was a group of Armourers from my mess at a table and one called out to me (Dead seriously) telling me not to join them and so take the trouble to them. There was an understanding that if you got yourself into trouble in Bhugis St, you were on your own. He put his hands on my shirt and I began seeing 'red' though I'd admit, I was getting worried. I took each of his hands (it was pathetic) and forced them out, twisting so his elbows were together coming up his chest. I should have kept twisting and broken them for him but instead; once he had calmed down I released him. I whistled for the police (we weren't getting anywhere). Cop's unfortunately only turn up at riots, etc. After more haggling with him and the "friends" I gave the punk \$5 and he cleared-off. The only other way out I could see would be to take on all the Chogies, with Rick and between us we would have lost a lot more than \$5. About 04.30 I arrived back on board feeling very mean and went straight to bed. (Someone had made it up for me. Thank you).

I never want another run ashore like that one. I'm staying out of the city for the rest of this visit. The 'Oriental' is different again after each visit. More white-trash gets in there and as regard the girls, beer flows both sides of the counter.



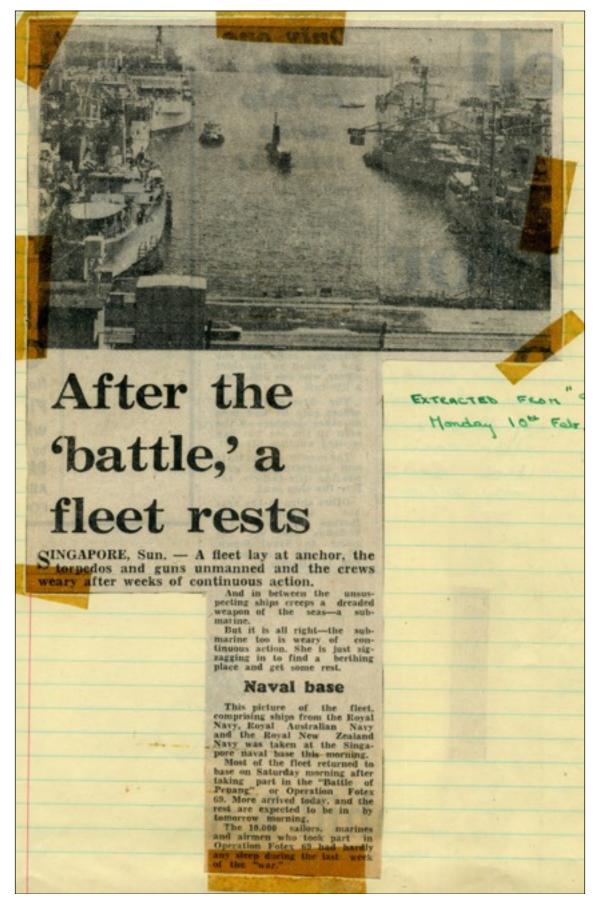
View from 13 Berth to HMS Terror

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Ozzie and George and (Netley) Casey

Self, Trevor Osborne, George Lacey, Ben Casey



Extracted from "Straits Times" Monday 10th February 1969



Kit, Noddy, Brum, Mac, Coxy and Doug (at Hong Kong)

Noddy (?), Brum Hay, Mac McGibbon, Doug (?) and on the deck, Paul Cox

Stayed on board today – slept in until 13.00.

Dave wanted money fast so I've bought his watch off him for £10 and my Seiko; worth £16 out here. His (MINE) watch was an Omega and it is worth £37 out here and worth about £70 in UK. I'm going to get hit hard by Customs, I think.

1 X watch	£70
Binoc's	£15 - £17
Camera	£44
Stereo record player	£36

My gold ring and Parker should go through without customs charge.

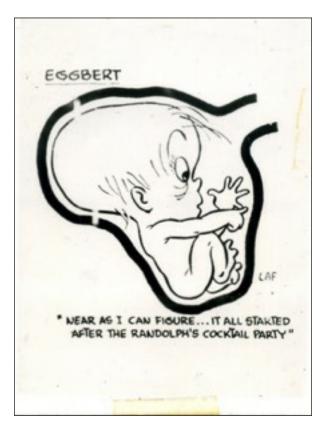
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The 'King' at Terror

(Must have had a very high opinion of myself for this photo) Why?

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Hong Kong In the workshop preparing for the children's party

"Get back swabs"

Self, Kev Stockdale, Dennis (Mac) and Dickie

Monday 10-02-69 page 170

I am disgusted with the organisation of the sports. I couldn't find anyone who knew anything of the X-country and nobody has been in touch with me. After this I doubt if I shall represent the ship again. There's not enough interest at the other end. Officers are put in charge, or they volunteer for this kind of thing in order to make favourable impressions on their Docs; Superficial Wazz!

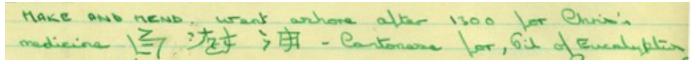
The ship had general 'make and breaks' by Dept's this afternoon. Spent the evening in the 'Oriental'.



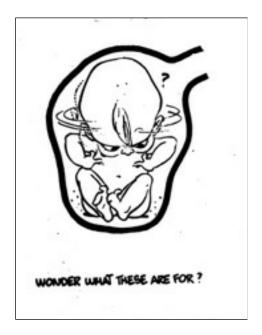
HM Minesweepers berth - Sembawang Shipyard

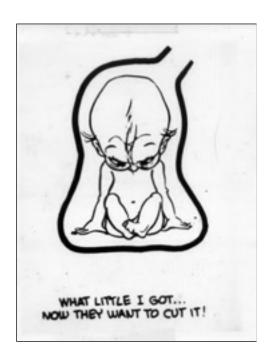
Tuesday 11-02-69

MAKE AND MEND. Went ashore after 13.00 for Chris' medicine



Why couldn't she obtain that in HK from some pharmacist? Caught the Koh Tay Yat bus from Semba's to Chang Tang village – a 5c ride (one and a halfpence). I handed Christine's letter to the man behind the counter. He understood and showed me a few bottles of the oil. I bought two small bottles of concentrated stuff which be easier for posting airmail.





Tuesday 11-02-69

While I was in the village I bought two sets of figurines of Chinese workers: a sculptor of toys, a pottery maker and his wife, a pottery decorator and a fisherman's wife. The figures are made from a very fine plaster which rings (similar to bone china) when tapped. They are cast in rubber coats which can be peeled-off, unlike toy rubber cast used in kiddies model sets which come as a sheath; not segments. The 4 figurines cost me \$6.25c. On the cable-deck the Chinese rogues were asking \$4 for two and rarely lower their prices reasonably enough to make haggling worthwhile.



"Ate a boiled beetle in there"

I had been chatting to a bar-girl who was eating what I thought to be soup. Persuaded to let me try some she handed me the spoon and I ladled some crunchy stuff into my mouth. When I asked, she explained it was medicine not lunch and I had eaten a large beetle. I did not ask what it cured.

Lockhart Road - Hong Kong



Gannet '61' given a 'cold-launch', Langkawi

I reached the shipyard by RN school-bus. I had to take a shower, the second within two hours. My clothes were sodden long before I was back on board.

I got \$10 off Dolly and Hank and I went into Singa's on the KTY (again). We always see more of the area by travelling on the slow buses. I've noticed a rubber factory along the road. Each of the ordinary people's houses have, on one wall a red tapestry depicting a religious scene with, always an old man. It is around the tapestry that the joss is burnt along with the wooden "wick'd" candles.



The view opposite the Royal Naval Britannia Club



<u>Brush – Commercial salesman - Singapore</u>

Wednesday 12-02-69 page 174

I lined the deck for leaving harbour and what an exit too! We gave Singa's a 15 gun salute and were returned 7; the maximum we could receive as we were sailing without an admiral.

That was 14.30 – by 17.00 we were at Flying Stations to receive the COD. I went through the routine of loading the guns for testing but forgot to lower the elevation so when they were operated from FLYCO the red pyrotechnic stars shot up vertically; narrowly missing the F/D on the way down. If they had been fired in that position for a jet 'bolter' the flares would have been fired into the aircrafts port mainplane. I knew what was coming next and a few min's later a chockhead ran across to say Commander Air wished to see me!! (Ah well....Gulp & get on with it). He tried, instead of 'bollocking' me, to explain what I already knew – about hitting an aircraft, so instead of looking like a reproached school-boy I simply told him I was responsible; that such an occurrence had never happened before with me, I realised the danger and that it wouldn't (I assured him – Got to talk on the same level with these knobs to get any joy) happen again with me on watch.

Reflection: I used the term 'knob' [nob] as one would describe gentry, not as is used more derogatorily used these days.

I don't know what kind of talk-down he had envisaged but nothing came out in my direction.

ZIP!! Bullshit baffles Brains......----....sometimes.

No mail again from Helen.

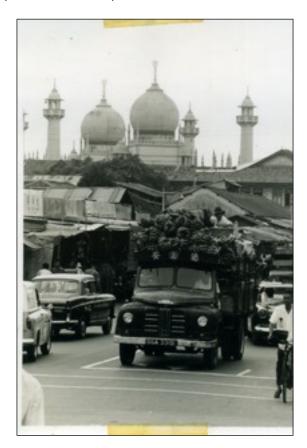
Very quiet day with little to note.

There was a young soldier of Bray, Kept his wife in the family way. Till she got alert And used a vaginal squirt, When they'd spent she said, "Let us spray".

There was a young man from Porton, Who had an incredibly short-un, What he lacked in length, He made up in strength, With a stroke like a 650 Norton.

A clever commercial female, Had prices tattooed on her tail, And below her behind, For the sake of the blind A duplicate version in Braille.

A masculine girl of Khartoum,
Asked a lady-like boy to her room,
They spent the whole night
In a hell of a fight,
As to which, should do what, and to whom.



Singapore



Bridge opposite Government House

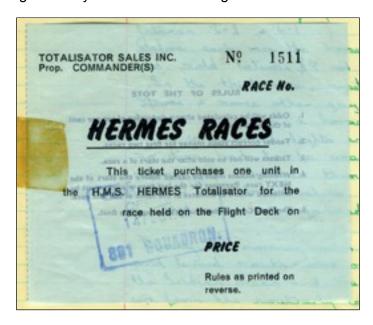
There was a young man called Skinner, Who took a young lady to dinner, At a quarter to nine they sat down to dine, By twenty to ten he was in her.

There was a young maiden named Myrtle, Had quite an affair with a turtle, And what's more phenomenal, A swelling abdominal, Proved to Myrtle, the turtle was fertile.

There was a young lady called Gloria, Whose boyfriend said may I explore ya! She replied to the chap, I'll draw you a map, Of where others have been to, before ya!

An ignorant maiden named Rewpid, Did something exceedingly stupid, When her lover had spent, She douched in cement, And gave birth to a statue of Cupid. To celebrate St Valentine's Day we had our Hermes Races – "The Freemantle Stakes" on the F/D tonight. Tickets were bought @ 1/- max stakes, odds varied between 3 – 1 and 6 – 1.

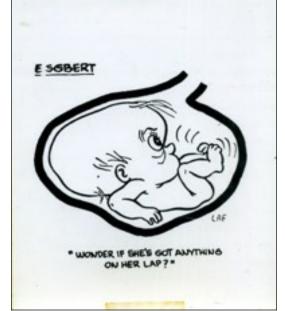
Before each race the horses were each put up for auction and sold for between \$8 and \$16. In the third race: I, Mick, Gass, Henery, AEN, Ching, Stevie and some other guy formed a syndicate and bought ourselves a horse; Orange "Bhugis Street Bounder" The computerised lights and scoring table went U/S so dice had to be used and with Joe Pickin riding our horse we streaked through the 48 lengths to win £25 for ourselves. The race was organised by the Hermes Steering Committee



!

During the morning watch The Force left the Java Sea and turned south-east out of the Sundra Strait into the Indian Ocean and the long swell which comes up from the southerly latitudes. During the days we passed the British owned Christmas Island which is the last inhabited place between Java and Australia, bar the Cocos Isles which are further to the west. This island should not be confused with the Christmas







<u>Saturday 15-02-69</u> page 178

There's a very big rolling swelling out on the Ogg, though no crests. We completed a RAS (S) with *RFA Reliant* this morning. I was working 6 Charlie – 7 Delta stores and handled 900 lbs of tinned milk. It was a short RAS and someone was having a personal RAS out of it. Each crate of tinned milk which came down to us had had one end carefully split and a tin or two removed. Split crates are hard to handle – obviously, so I suggested that if one bloke, up topside was capable of removing a tin or two and stowing them undetected, why not simply give him a crate and let him "Clear-Off"!

Some guy during the RAS was standing on a port-side boat-deck when a 'goffer' came over and knocked him against the far bulkhead. Since then pipes were made to the effect that all port weather-decks were out of bounds.

Tonight another "Off the Cuff" was played over the SRE for the Ships Co. After I had finished writing to Christine I came down to join in the games competition. Everybody enjoys this programme though few are prepared to run up the SRE and other spots around the ship where various articles have to be taken in order to claim the two cans of 'icers' beer.

One clue was Ah So! – All clean again. I ran up with some toilet-paper. We had misinterpreted the first clue – well a bit of flannel here and there. What in fact was wanted was an article from a steam-bath from Okinawa.

Later came "A score of these would do" and the supplementary record was "Light my fire", so I got Dolly and Coxy to scrape between them 20 different match-boxes. The SRE wanted lighters, very close though

Then they asked for a book with the word "tribute" on page 48 so giving the lads my books to look through I wrote the words in on page 48 of this diary. This time flannel didn't pay-off. I wrote "the hands all send tribute to Lossie". Unfortunately we were still off Portland Bill at that time. - Ah well!

Later they asked for "The red, blue and green of yesterday". That was a cinch; it was the colours of the race tickets used at yesterdays meet. I had to go up 8 decks at break-neck speed to the 'flag-waggers' deck on the island. I wasn't the first up there but I was the only one with the correct colours and so secured two cans of beer! I had to talk briefly over the SRE with Lt Cmdr. Allen, who asked me. "Did you win anything last night?" "Oh just £25 in a syndicate sir". He said if we'd won all that what was I doing, trying to get free beer. You can take the lad out of Yorkshire but......

The officer, who won "The Brain of Britain" 68, is on board here so he entertained us for a while.

2016 Google / Wikipedia records 1968 won by a Ralph Roby but the year before in 1967 it was won by a naval officer: Lt Cmdr Loring.





Kung Hei Fat Choi (Happy New Year)

When he was asked about winning the competition he said of the two other finalists; one man was a holder of degrees etc etc. The other, a Welsh girl who was a 'failed' teacher. Both he said were far wiser than himself but probably a bit shy when speaking over a mic' to millions of listeners. He said he won on luck and a capability to talk loudly and confidently – something he had gained from his career in the navy, loud mouthing to everyone.

Sunday 16-02-69 page 180

Heavy swell and little flying on.

Monday 17-02-69 page 180

Lot of people on board with colds. Chinese New Year

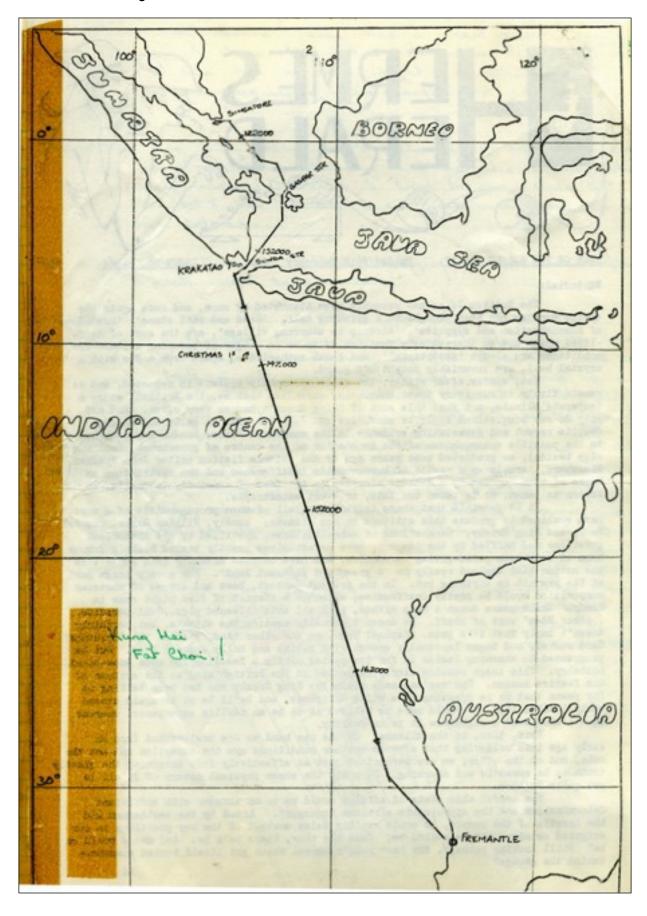
Tuesday 18-02-69 page 180

Arrive Fremantle 09.00 – I had planned a quiet photo run – BUT!!! We tried a couple of Middies of the actual Swan Lager then walked our way around Perth after a 30 min run-in on the train from Fremantle; which cost us nothing. Then Perth seemed to be – girls – girls - and more girls. I bought a pair of kangaroo (roo) skin slippers intentionally for Helen though I'm not sure of her shoe fittings (A\$5.50).

I posted Chris' medicine off to H.K. It cost me a fortune – "Easy come"

Later these girls x 3 materialized in a restaurant; The Jade – a Chogie nosh shop.

Page 181



Two of the girls were Eyeties one of which Hank chose. They had a friend – part Maori and I chose this Polish – Australian, Anna. We had a good night.

Savoy Plaza lounge, Blue Meanies night-club, Apartment, Ship.

<u>Wednesday 19-02-69</u> page 181

<u>Thursday 20-02-69</u> page 181

'Am duty today so I'm staying on board. I got up at 07.00 on Wednesday and haven't had any solid sleep since (detached). I tried to phone Anna but the No 1 San at the Jade must have closed-up 2-3 min's beforehand.

<u>Friday 21-02-69</u> page 181

Blue Meanies – Mark IV guitar group playing – back aboard after a late night dancing sesh'.

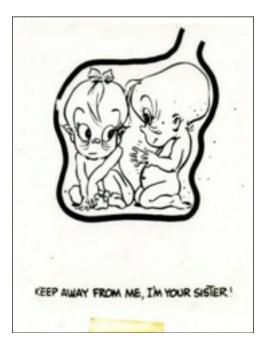
Saturday - Monday 24-2-69 page 181

Week-end in Perth with Mick (*Rodgers*). Spent Sunday afternoon wandering around barefooted. On Sunday night I was approaching my 3rd Sans sleep (*I did go 72 hours without sleep*) I took a pill which I believed would keep me awake for a further 8 hours. Later I found out the pill was only a head-ache pill though I did stay awake. Just goes to prove – again – "It's all in the mind"

Monday night went to the Movies to see Shakespeare's, Camelot. Triff!

Monday 24-02-69 page 181

Had my last "hooley in the city with Mick and a couple of squadron lads. We drank jugs and jugs and jugs of beer then bought a bottle of Bacardi and headed for the Pinnochio Nite-Club. Took Joy home to an area called Dalkieth, out in the wilds (it seemed). Back on board at 06.15.



Though we did consume a great deal of alcohol that evening I recall it quite well and it did not end as I had hoped it would. Joy was a pretty girl and we hit it off well. I offered to see her home and so we took a taxi back to her house. Once there she told me she couldn't possibly let me into her parent's home so late at night. (Her parents? Had I not established if she had her own 'gaff' No! sucker) I had only a couple of dollars on me and they were of little use to me.... the taxi had left. I had to make my way back to Fremantle on foot. There were no street lamps and the houses seemed to be on the edge of nowhere. I had no sense of bearing and turned to walk what I hoped was the correct way. I had not gone far in near blackness when in the silence I sensed a disturbance no louder than someone coughing lightly or clearing their throat quietly. Suddenly tuning in to danger I paused and stared into the gloom from where the sound had come (flight or fight). I saw the dull glow of a cigarette and trying to sound confident called out "Is there someone there"? Running would be of little use when I had no sense of where to run to so I quickly discounted 'flight' and I stepped toward the light and an old man stepped out from the edge of some bushes. He spoke then to ask if I had any cigarettes; Phew, I relaxed a little. He was a tramp or vagrant but I was not out of danger yet. I made as if to turn out my pockets as if to declare I had no money on me telling him that if I smoked I would share them with him. We both relaxed I told him my predicament and he told me I was heading toward the "bush" (out-back) and pointed the way I should be heading to make my way to the main road. Soon I saw I was high above the Swan River and I could clearly see boats and it for a while I contemplated scrambling down, taking one in the knowledge that I could arrive in Fremantle (where the river approaches the ocean) and where I would find Hermes. That was a stupid idea and I walked on but felt I was losing my way; though now I was in what seemed a smart affluent area. I needed directions again and so went to a house and woke the residents knocking on their door. The man came to the door but wisely wouldn't open it. I explained who I was and where from and my only desire to return to port. Convinced of my credentials he opened the door then to tell me directions to get to the road to Fremantle. I walked and walked and then felt the warmth of the morning sun as it rose signalling the day and the fact that if I did not make good time I could find myself on a charge of being 'adrift'. I flagged a car down which only turned out to be a taxi. "Would he take me to the port for two dollars". No but he would take me two dollars worth of the way there. I did make it back arriving at the ship at 06.15; footsore and weary.



Paid today & broke today; £6

Had to walk back from Dalkieth (?)

Had no sleep again as I arrived back on board at 06.15 and had to be up by 07.30 to shower and shave.

Tuesday 25-02-69 page 182

Ashore to the 'Waldorf' elite night spot – arrived back on board at 07.20 on Wednesday morn' – no sleep; I was told by Maureen (no recollection as to who Maureen was) that I looked between 20 & 21 years old (late nights and early mornings starting to take their toll)

Wednesday 26-02-69

No entry.

Thursday 27-02-69

Sailed from Fremantle at 09.30 with 84 Aussies waving and cheering at us; I even saw a Union Jack being waved. As we passed by the last promontory we were saluted by civvies by prolonged blasts on the car horns. A few of the lads had 'lumpy' throats as we went clear of land.

Apart from night-clubs I did get out to do a bit of sight-seeing around Perth, Kings Park and Cottesloe Beach. I even did a bit of aerial photography of Perth. (From the top of a tower in Kings Park). Had a letter from Helen today, - "Oh Boy! Xxxxx.

Between FWA and Perth there are 17 rail-stations and the train stops on average every two min.

Thursday continued

Names like: Show Ground, Subiaco and Karrakatta appear; these places are just suburbs.

The night-clubs each have a cover charge of A\$2.00 for men and A\$1.00 for lasses. By paying the fees of this price the local riff-raff are kept out and a good selection of lasses are available (though this includes the 'chisellers' too unfortunately). The best club I visited was Waldorfs – it really gets packed with the more 'Hip' people. (How am I going to stick-out Loftus & its perishing 'Town Hall' now)?

The last time I heard from the family (ex-Springrise) was before and at Hong-Kong. So bloody what! We are on passage to UK now: Yech!; with a few 'rabbits' to show for my family. Whilst working on the first morning, Mick and I were 'skylarking' in the forr'ard hangar I nearly lost my finger when I spun around a corner-post; my ring caught and sliced into my finger (Blood). I had to have it cut-off

- the ring that is – not my finger. It was no loss as it had no sentimental value to me. I doubt I'll be able to wear another ring on that finger again.

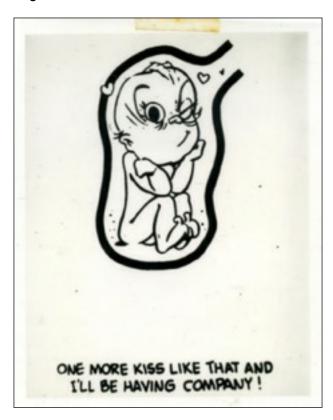
The ring was a non-hallmarked gold signet ring with an ornate letter K set in a black stone, purchased in Hong Kong. I still have a scar nearly 50% around the ring finger on my right hand and I never did wear a ring on the finger again. A future brother-in-law called Kevin had the ring from me.

Friday 28-02-69 page 183

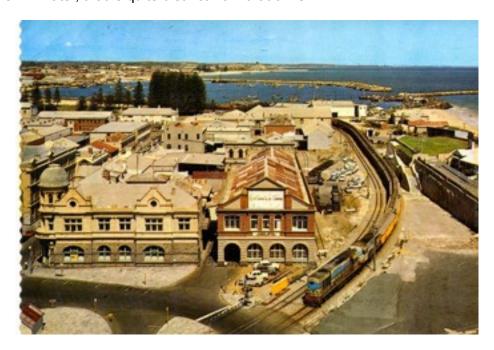
The ships radio still picks up Radio 6.P.M. which is the Perth; pop music and news broadcasting station. Yesterday we heard that a 20ft Tiger shark approached a bather at Cottesloe Beach; completely circuminspected the man then swam off. It was last seen heading north.



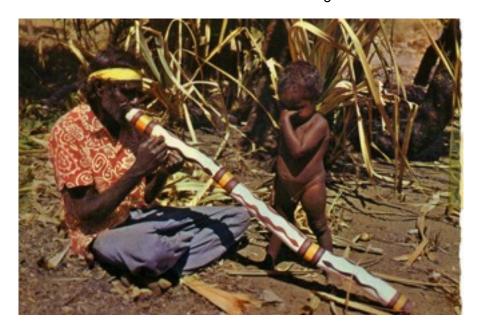
Page 184



An Aussie who came down the mess as a guest of Jim's told us that sharks do not like human flesh, but that the occasional, unfortunate bathers are mistaken for fish. Apparently size is irrelevant as the sharks sight is not terrif' though they have a good sense of smell. Sadly to say as I've no doubt we two-leggers do have a smell, even in water, that is quite distinct from that of fish.



Overlooking Fremantle, WA



Aborigine plays the Didjeridoo to an appreciative 'Picaninny'

For the topic; bathers who are so disposed as to be attacked by a shark, are bitten once only. Sharks do have a sense of taste; pity they make such a mess of their 'tasters.'

In the event of being directly attacked should the bather hold out the hand or foot which he can get by without and thereby possibly save on the complete loss of limb and life?

In the case of the Cottesloe incident, the bather who confronted the Tiger shark, walked back to the beach unharmed.





Saturday 01-03-69

page 186

A cold day and well clouded over. The ocean rollers are 'throwing' the bows of the ship. Today it was intended that we should re-fuel from *Olna* and that *HMS Grenville* should re-fuel from us. As it turned out *Olna's* steering-gear broke-down and Grenville's feed boiler had trouble so no RAS' took place. Grenville steamed back to Rottennest Island; north-west of Fremantle. The island is a holiday resort. On it live the world's only Quokkas – a cross between the kangaroo and a rat.

Rottenest: read as Rottnest derived from the Dutch: Rotte-nest meaning Rats Nest.

Have you heard about Madame Lupescu, Who came to Romania's rescue, It's a wonderful thing, to be under a king' Is democracy better? I ask you!

Thought or the day:-

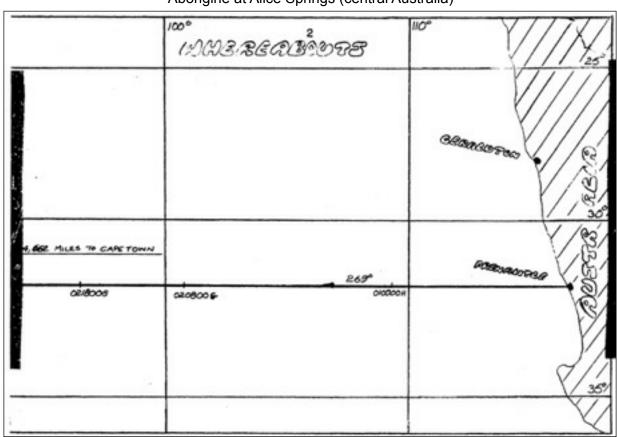
If wanking produces friction and friction produces heat; how many wanks of a donkey's prick to boil a 250 volt kettle?

Martin Rodgers

Page 187



Aborigine at Alice Springs (central Australia)





Sunday 02-03-69

'ANNUVER FOUGHT'

People in glass houses shouldn't!

Was awake until 03.00 this morning trying to remember what happened on Wednesday 19th. I went up on the boat-deck – it was freezing but I had to work out everything I did in Perth & Fremantle that was connected with Anna. When everything was crystal clear I could have done a dance: 'fair chuffed', so then I could write to Anna and give her rocks. I wrote to Helen today also.

Now I'm clear with; Christine, Wendy, Helen & Anna (I hope). It is time for a few replies now.

Monday 03-03-69 page 188

I got an overdue letter written to Frances, sent-off.

The chefs claim to be on Run-Down-Period (RDP) and the food today was foul. They must be the world's only cooks capable of burning water.

Insulting one another is becoming the pastime of the guys in the mess now. I got up and left this at standeasy, chocker with the 'bitchiness among so called blokes.

I am starting to catch-up with my sleep that I gladly missed in Perth; the lines under my eyes are all lifting up into a bunch and will, I hope, disappear soon.

I went up to 'musical PT on the F/D. Pity my correspondence course did not reach the ship before departing Fremantle. Rather boring at sea now.







Hong Kong: entrance of Tiger Balm Garden

Tuesday 04-03-69

page 190

GAMEX II on the flight-deck this morning. We in AED entered a team of 10 for the 'potted-sports. There were: 1) Straight forward relay. 2) The Fireman's Race. 3) The Train; where we had run up and down the deck holding hands, much to the amusement of ourselves and spectators alike. 4) The Charlie Chaplin; where we had to walk over the distance with a tennis ball between our knees, place our left hand on our hip (very nice ducky) and swing a walking stick; simulated by a deck-hockey stick, in our right hand. 5) We had the immoral 'Skin the Snake' race; which was run through twice.



The Peak tramway - Hong Kong



Hong Kong: a side street

6) We played 'O-Grady and O-Grady said do press-ups. That was not bad except O-Grady did not say Stop! Jeez but did that fettle a few of the teams.

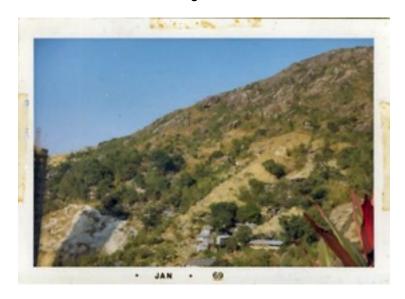
We won the Gamex and were presented with two cans each of Swan Lager and a shield, by the Skipper (Fez)



Paul's boif today. 19 years old Today's thoughtDuhh!.....Oh!



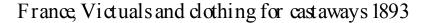
Pagoda in Tiger Balm Jim, Paul and me



Shanty Town seen from Tiger Balm (Shamshuipo)

After the Gamex there was the knock-out, tug-o-war in which we were beaten, in the finals, by 801 who were each awarded 1 can of beer. "Can't win 'em all" though the validity of the decided winners was in our minds, in doubt because 801 substituted their team to include some guys, just off watch.

- This afternoon we passed north of two islands: Coordinates: 37° 50' south, 77° 30' east
- 1) Amsterdam, an island, 4 miles across which is a meteorological station and once home of a colony of 40 people.
- 2) St Pauls upon which was 13 casks by a shack, upon the door of which was the inscription.







Leaving Fremantle 4th from right 'Tis I'

?, Self, Kev Stockdale, Dickie Bird, Dennis Mc Alhone, Pete Dempsey



In the hangar – children's party Hong Kong

Page 194

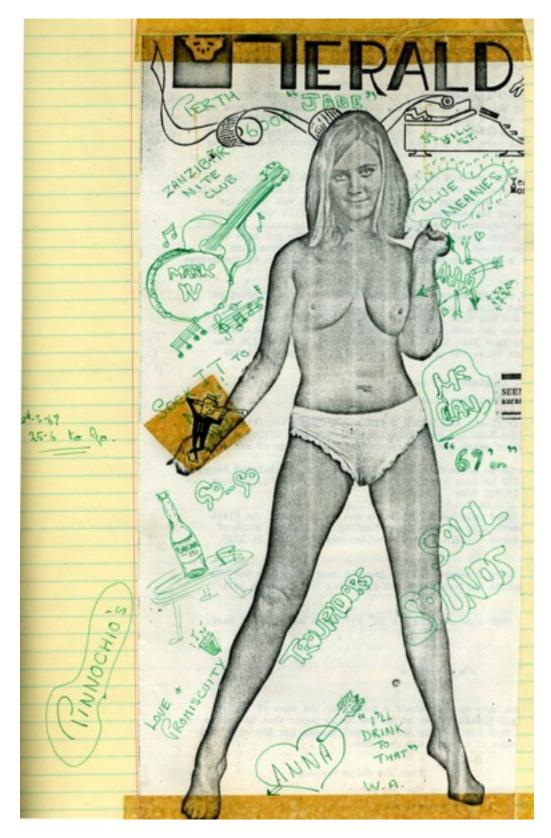


The Aunt Sally Show. Hong Kong

The shirt I am wearing with its black arms, red body and white chest panel is the standard issue

Air Ordnance flight-deck shirt.

The cummerbund is not



"You've given back your ring to me So I can set you free, Run to him". (Beatles lyric)

No entry for this page.



Wednesday 05-03-69

We are about 3,250 miles from Cape Town and approx' 2000 miles out from Fremantle. There is a very heavy swell hitting us from southerly quarters and the sky is overcast.

I've put Anna out of my mind now; with that page of inked–in, freaking-out. There is a terrific resemblance of that pin-up girl and Her! *Inked-in: refers to my additional pen work on the picture on page 195*

This morning I engrossed myself in my work and talked very little to anyone. I spoke even less during my dinner hour.

Since leaving Perth I've been in an assortment of moods because of.......(*Anna*)..but with luck and a bit of Chinese Joss I'm levelled-off, on an even keel; - which is better than the 'H' is fairing in this rather dirty weather.

Thursday 06-03-69 page 197

The ship is still making hard work in the heavy swell. We had a group photograph taken of AED on the F/D this morning. The section was given an early chop this aft. The cable-deck is still out of bounds and has been for the past 2 days due to inflowing sea-water coming up the 'hawse-hole'.

Played bridge tonight with Hank partnering me.....

page 198

.....against Paul & Mick Lander; we won by about 240. If we could have afforded to play even 'a penny a point' we'd have each been 10/- in pocket now. We're in Delta time; 3hrs ahead of London. Mc the steward is coming round tomorrow with 'tot' payment for beer.

Thought for the day:

"Where clichés can cometrue"

Friday 07-03-69

page 198

Easy working day and an early secure. I went up on the F/D for some bronzying, then musical PT, followed by one and a half hours of preliminary foil fencing, with Mick, behind the island. An officer came up to say he would organize some instruction for us. I've started work, on my own toward my A-levels

Tonight was the "Grand Yomping Contest"

Menu

1 x large 2" deep tray of spaghetti Neopolitanier.

6 x boiled eggs

1 x giant oggie: 2ft 6 inches long, 6 inches wide, 2 inches high

1 x large bowl of trifle.

Each course was started by the contestants simultaneously and points were gained on a time basis One, fairly small guy "Charlie" spewed-up into his bowl of eggs, drained out the eggs and carried on eating. He then turned sideways and spewed down the front of his assistant.

The "Tank" was a steady eater but consistent in high scoring and on the last course rushed through to be ordained

"HAMMOCK GUTS OF THE HERMES 1969"

Charlie faithful to habit spewed-up into his trifle and then continued eating (Ugh!)

The contest was held on the aft lift and had a commentary run by the "Big A" (Lt Cdr Allen)

On the back of the lift was a Vomiting Room and boy did they need it. Even I felt a little queasy by the end of the competition. A few contestants dropped out; finding themselves unable to cope with the pace.

The winner was a tall slim built guy who, we learned had been for his dinner already before the contest. He was presented with a further large pasty, which he proceeded to hurl into the spectators.

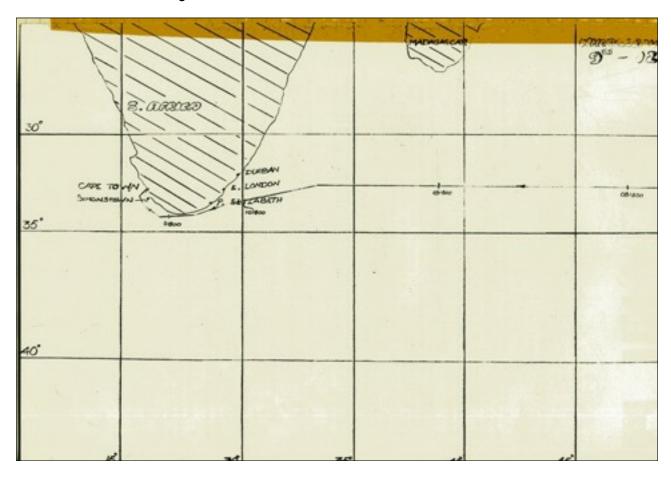
Saturday 08-03-69

Duty tonight but secured at noon. I spent all afternoon Fencing (training) on the F/D, then early evening in continuance on the Quarterdeck. Lt. France is going to use his influence to allow us the use of that deck each night.

I wrote off a letter to Helen and posted it with another one to Anna.

Clocks went back one hour tonight.

Page 199



Off the Cuff was played over the SRE this evening. Not very interested in beer though; so I never bothered. Got a bit cheesed-off in the time I spent sitting in the mess after completing my letters. So I made an early night. I wonder what time I'll wake up tomorrow morning.

Thursday awake	at 06.00	
Friday	at 05.30	
Sattoday	at 05.10	
Sunday	?	05.30

Sunday 09-03-69 page 199

Flying commenced today. Was on LMN's from 12.00 till 15.30 + odd, then went fencing; (so much to learn to defend myself let alone advance). Another foil was broken today. These things just happen.

Wrote again to Helen though these days there is little of interest in my daily doings to relate to her. I will leave her next letter until Cape Town.

I spent some time on the weather-deck, after supper, getting some 'freshers'.

As I woke up early again this morning I got up, made my bunk and took a book up on the boat-deck, beaten only by the sun which rises directly behind our stern; on the present course. Am not turning-in till 23.00 this night and perhaps I'll sleep some.

Today's thought

QUOTE: "If you can't take a joke you shouldn't, SIGN – ON" UNQUOTE.

FAREWELL TO HONG KONG

The word went round the colony from Stanley to Lye Mun, From the sun-kissed sands of Shek – O, to the hills beyond Kowloon, That, Their Lordships had decided, we had lingered much too long And decreed, in all Their wisdom that the Navy leave Hong Kong.

In Aberdeen they heard it and around Yaumati Creek, In bordellos west of Wanchai, stately villas on the Peak, That in future, US Navy men would poach on our reserves, And the mighty 'China Fleet' become, Strategical Reserves.

.

Stonecutters heard the tidings, took it up and passed it through, To the shanty homes of Shamshuipo and the dockyard at Taikoo, That the erstwhile signs of Britain's power would vanish from the scene And the China Fleet Club soon would house United States, Marines.

§ §

For a hundred years the ships sailed seaward, passed Green Islands shore,
To police the Yangtze gorges, or the coast of Singapore,
From the Bays of Mirs and Bias, to the north of Weihuiwei,
And now can we believe? Has the Navy had its day?

§ .

No more the Fleet steams through the Pass, the cruisers in the van,
No more grey lines at anchor out as far as Shaukiuan,
For the Fleet has sailed for England, to the Hoe and Portsmouth Hard
And a solitary frigate holds the West Wall of the Yard.

§ §

Hang the banners out in Shanghai, let the bells ring in Suntow, Let them celebrate in Canton, and rejoice in Chinwang Tao, It's a holiday in Peking. Mr Mao laughs loud and long; For, Their Lordships have decide that the Navy leave Hong Kong.

Poem extracted and copied from the Hermes Herald. Originator not known.

Monday 10-03-69

page 201

We ran into an unexpected storm at 02.00 this morning. Previous to this, the maximum possible aircraft were taken down the hangar. Those left on deck were placed midships; abaft the 'island' facing fore and aft to present as little resistance as possible. In addition, each aircraft was given 10 chain lashings to keep them secure.

I awoke at 04.45, but willed myself to sleep-on till 06.45 when reveille was sounded.

I took cleaning gear and grease up to the LMN's; showing my face in the workshops first and found the sponson for'rard of the angle *(deck)* under a flow of about 1" of water. I wasn't required up the section so I came down the mess and wrote a '6 pager' to the 'Old Dears'. By force of habit of writing to Helen though I put kisses on the first and second pages. I hope they see the funny-side to it. It's the second time I've done anything similar; last time, I put a stamp on at an angle and put X's round each side and posted the envelope to Frances.

The F/D in front of the island and weather-decks are out of bounds. I had to wear my life-jacket when I went on deck to check my locker for cartridges. (Not my personal locker but a Ready Use Locker (RUL); one of several temporary explosives stowage's belonging to a Quarter. The contents were a quantity of one and a half inch diameter; red and green signal flares).

This afternoon most of the lads are on Make and Breaks getting bored.

Tuesday 11-03-69

page 201

Yesterday afternoon a 'goffa' shifted the port 'Pinnace' on its crutches so that from 17.30 – 18.30 we had to slow down to nine knots while it was rescued. We then speeded up, steaming still due west at 17 knots which is as much as this weather will allow. It gives a speed made good of about 14 knots.

This morning we stood close into Port Elizabeth. We had 'Skippers Rounds' in the mess this morning. Our caboose, like the mess has been issued with new green and white candy striped, cushion-bed covers. In Half-Way House they (the striped covers) have given us more length (apparent) and look a little (apparent) lighter.

Midday today we passed an oil-rig? and this afternoon a SA (South African Air Force) Shackleton flew over us and signalled: "Glad to see you again... Have a good time in Cape Town".

The ships routine in Capers is: turn-to at 08.35 secure at 12.00 and we've a Make and Mend each day. We were paid this morn' R25.00; about £13.00. This is a short payment; the rest will be made up on the 27th a day before my boif.!!

CAPE-TOWN

At 05.00, this morning we rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Procedure Alpha was in form and we entered the port with our deck 'lined.' Berthing was completed by 09.30.

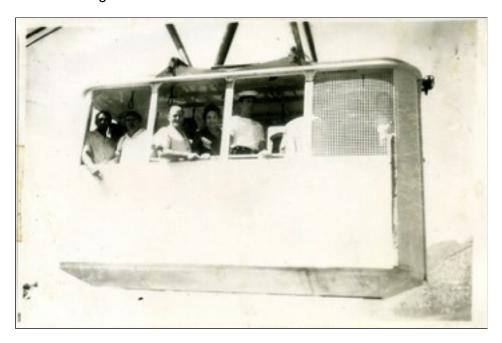
I was duty and had to subsequently stay aboard all day. At dinner time a mail collection was piped; 40 sacks of mail have mounted up during our 'sea-period'. There was for me alone: a letter from the 'Old Dears', a couple of Dalesman [Yorkshire life magazines], a letter from Christine who sounded very grateful for the medicine I sent from Perth. In addition to that mail I received a letter from Wendy (Susan) Tan in Singapore which made my day. I had had my doubts about her answering, but she did and I am 'fair chuffed'.

Thought for the Day: 'Depth'! (In 2010 I've no idea what that was about)

Cape Town was enjoying fine weather when we arrived and the Table Top was completely free of the mist or low cloud which persisted during our last visit. I finished-off my film in the camera, then.... in re-winding I snapped the reel. I put the camera into the hands of the 'photographic section' who put the film into its cassette ready to be sent back to Agfa for processing.

I left the ship just after dinner, with my camera for a quiet run. From Georges Street I caught a bus to Kloof Nek. As I was carrying a large note, only I paid no fare. The fare to pay was repeated, when it came to catching the bus which took me as far as the Cable-car lower station. The cable trip was a few minutes only and owing to the cold and the rate of climb I had to 'pop' my ears 3 – 4 times on the way up.

Once on top I was away with my camera. The flat appearance of the mountain top is not false as I found; but for outcrops of grey rocks which never rise more than a foot or two. There is a very course grass grows on top which blooms with a bright flame-red flower......but not this season.



THE CABLE CAR TABLE MOUNTAIN (TAFELBERG)

Cable way opened: 4th Oct 1929
Cabin capacity: 23 persons
Height of Lower Station: 1.200 ft
Height of Upper Station: 3,500 ft
Cabin speed: 9.4 mph
Length of cable: 4,000 ft
Highest point: 3,567 ft

An advertising board for petrol read: Alles Wel – Op Pad Met Shell

Afrikaan for: Go Well Go Shell

I came back for supper, having walked down the mountain. Everyone was friendly saying 'hello' to me. One old (nice) lady seeing me in uniform asked me if a ship was in....(What!). And someone had the cheek to ask what country I was from, (Sheesh!).

2010 I must have held a very high opinion of Britain's impact in the world to really expect foreign nationals (in their own country) to automatically know of the presence of a single capital ship and to recognise our uniform distinct from all others.



Cutting from a Cape Town newspaper

One or two hotels and clubs are collar and ties only but everywhere, now a sailor (who obviously does not where a tie) in uniform will be accepted as being correctly dressed.



This cutting was put in Friday morning's Cape Times.

'Bull'

Lt Mc Coy never left the ship yesterday as was found out shortly after publishing.

It was rectified in the evening paper.

Cutting from the Evening Cape Argus



HMS Hermes arriving at Table Bay. Wednesday 12 March 1969

2,000 sailors on six-day visit

HERMES DOCKS IN CAPE TOWN

The Argus Shipping Correspondent

H.S. HERMES, the first all-missile ship to serve the Royal Navy, arrived in Table Bay today on her way from Australia to England to spend a six-day visit here.

Sixty-three guns signalled her arrival in perfect weather — a 21-gun capute to South Africa, a 21-gun reply from the Lion's Head Battery, and another 21-gun salute from Hermes to the State President.

With the Royal Marine band, playing on deck and officers and crew lining the rails, she made a striking sight as she entered the dock.

The Senior British Naval Officer, South Africa, and Naval Attache (Commodore J. W. Cook) boarded the ship to welcome the commander (Capt. D. G. Parker) and the crew.

S.A. NAVY OFFICER

Lt. C. Furness, Officer of the Guard, met the ship on behalf of the Chief of the S.A. Navy and Commander of Maritime Defence (Vice-Admiral H. H. Biermann).

Lt.-Commander M. Heyns, the S.A. Navy's Liaison Officer, boarded the ship by helicopter before she entered the harbour.

Another early visitor was Mr. R. G. Veater, Civic Liaison Officer. Soon after the afteraft-carrier docked, the commander went ashore to pay courtesy calls on the Mayor, the Town Clerk, the British Ambassador, and the British Consul-General.

(Continued on Page 2, column 6)

THE British aircraft-carrier Hermes entering the docks today for a six-day stay. A full programme of entertainment, sport, and sightseeing has been arranged for the 2,000 officers and men. In the background is the Windsor Castle, which also docked this morning.



.

I allowed myself to be dragged ashore, by McGuiness, to have a drink. I was a bit reluctant as I was not going to chase 'clacker' on this visit and certainly planned to do no heavy drinking. Of the latter it was easy; I don't enjoy myself drinking heavily [just now] so after a few bottles of lager we took a taxi to the 'Colony' where two pop groups were playing: Port Elizabeth's, 'The Triangles' and the ship's own 'Soup-Q'. They were both triff'. We met up with a stoker I know and his girl and their crowd.

The girl Shirley was showing little interest in 'Stokes' so it was an obvious chance to step-in; regardless of what I had said before reaching port. I eventually left with, Shirley, a part Italian girl who told me she was engaged. 'Live dangerously'. I promised to get in touch with her again by phone at her works where she 'steno-types; she told me to ask for her by the name of Angela.

Comment added by Mick:

Why does Pope Paul wear swimming trunks in the bath?

He doesn't like to look down on the unemployed! Oink!

Friday 14-03-69

page 207

Normal turn-to; felt a bit groggy this morning and not through drinking either. 'Am doing a sub for Ozzie who is taking the week-end off; staying at some house close by Shirley's

This afternoon I phoned up. They must have thought me odd, up the Liaison Office.

'Dial'. "Could I speak to Angela?" "Speaking". "Oh, Hi Shirley"

Seems she's broken ties with Stokes; not unnaturally and had a tiff with the guy who put a ring on her finger. He said he found odd that she should be going to see her friends on a night, now and very coincidental that her nights out were at a time when the Hermes was in? I don't think I'll like this guy even if we never cross-swords.

I had, as a duty to clean the heads. While down there a visiting Afrikaan came down.

"Saay yo clinning the cack-house,

Thaat's a shit job Eeh? Haw, Haw, Haw!"

HUH!

He meant it in a good-natured way. At 6' 6" to 6' 8" He was built like a s—t house.

Thought for the Day: "An apple a day means about 365 a year"

I'm expecting a phone-call on the mess extension tomorrow from the lass, at Stand-Easy. I've sent post-cards to: Townie, *(can't think who that was)*, Mum & Dad, Ron, Wendy, Christine, Paul (my oppo at Lossie) and one to Helen of course.

Cape Town University is having its 'Rag-Week'. Their magazine is pretty good.

e.g. "Mommy we had a marvellous time while you were away. We took Granny's hearing aid up to 50,000 watts. You should see how her nose glows."

Saturday 15-03-69 page 207

Someone has 'had their spoon in'. I went ashore to meet S. between quarter to and 1-0-clock, after which I went into the Coral Lounge; had a glass of beer then went and caught the train out to Muizemberg on the east-coast – False Bay. It was a ¾ hour journey (I wasn't going to hang around for Shirley). Once there (I got off the train at St James and walked back – slowly). I went to the Pavilion where I discovered that *Hermes* ratings were being granted free service of cubicles, lockers and showers.

The bay; 22 miles of it, was very windy and the 'Ogg' was 'icers' but I went in it (self hero).

False Bay - - longest beach in the world.

Muizemberg: post-card on page 211

It was 'triff' surfing conditions and in swimming out about 50 yards I wrenched my right leg though I didn't know it until I was back on the beach for a sunbathing 'sesh'.

Down there I met up with a group of teenagers (wanted to buy my 'bells' and cap) (*Bell-bottom uniform trousers*). A couple of the girls, Sandra and Misselle wanted to come around the ship and see it for themselves. So at their own choosing (they're a pretty easy going crowd) they may come aboard tomorrow.

It was 'brass monkey' winds that were blowing till I left; about 17.00 and came back – just in time for supper, 'Starved'.

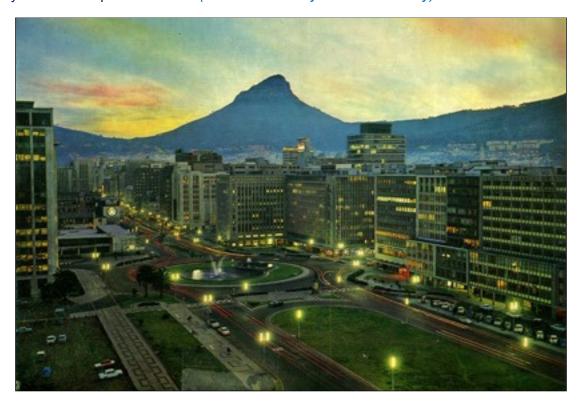
Tonight I was dragged (I can claim) ashore by Mc again to have my beer bought for me – in the Coral Lounge. We perpetrated the Sea Tavern in the grand Hotel (same building) where a 'Brown Hatter' came and sat next to me; 'Queer Get'. He asked "How big is the Hermes crew?"

"Oh, all about the same height as me!"

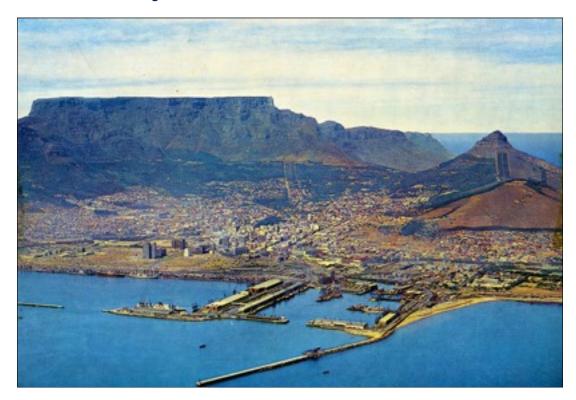
He couldn't; for his life see the funny comment and when I made the penny drop he came out with some effeminate laughter which put me right off my beer and as, Mc didn't want to 'lash me up' all night I decided to leave and came back aboard, early on.

Had a letter today from Frances "Thanks for the sarcasm" – that's OK. Her addition

"No Abdul you can't sleep on the floor". (2010 that's totally lost on me today)



Heerengracht, Main Boulevard – Cape Town's foreshore



Cape Town - Docks, Tafelberg & Lion Rock

Sunday 16-03-69

page209

Was duty today, of all days and the ship was open to visitors from 14.00; nearly 5,000 came aboard. From a description given, I believe "the crowd" came aboard and I missed them. I hung about the boat and Flight-Deck waiting for nigh on 2 hrs then went down the mess-deck – thinking perhaps they had 'scrubbed-round' it

There was a show put on for us in the hangar. 15 gorgeous girls 'they' proclaimed. They came and were all dregs, but for 3. They did a Sing-Along – saying we all knew the words. In fact the songs were so ancient I hadn't even heard the tunes before, of several. More so, the show was too clean and late starting. The only thing Jacks go to a show for is to see a suspender-belt, stacks of comely leg and a bit of fanny and wriggling behinds. The show lacked all that; even the jokes had no double-meanings or obvious lewd punch-lines. I felt very uncomfortable listening to each piece and applauded only out of manners. To give them their dues though, they put their hearts into it and one or two sketches were genuinely enjoyed.

NB. Todays dirty Thought:

Is a piece of Welsh fruit cake, a piece of fruit cake?

(Once more; in 2010 those words inscribed by Mick Rodgers seem less cryptic or meaningful than they may have at the time of entry............Was he having a go at the Welsh...... I don't know but Mick was soon to persuade me, to apply for a posting to RNAS Brawdy (HMS Goldcrest) in Pembrokeshire.

Last day ashore - last day abroad!

I went into town to join Shirley, for her dinner-hour. We walked around The Gardens and I had statues and dozens of, 'things of interest' pointed-out to me. We even walked around the South African National Art Gallery (the 2nd art gallery this commish'). Entrance was free for me – in uniform.

I agreed to seeing her tonight, after 23.00 and phoned her up at work to confirm – where's and when's. I went along to the bus-stop to meet the last two buses in – void. The first time I've ever been stood-up on a date; and last!! I wasn't sad about it though; I saved Rands.

My foot has a nasty sore on it, through dancing and walking. Prices I pay for enjoying myself.

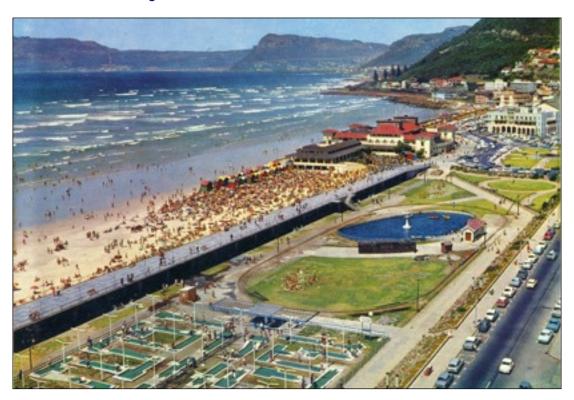
Came back aboard just after midnight; very sober, as per' use': natch'. (2010, 'As per usual, naturally' an abbreviated phrase I recall us using then.)

I had less to drink during the whole visit than I'd have taken, with ease, on one night in Perth and that place was sober (very) compared to Singa's. And during our stay I had no shorts at all. Even going so far as to turning down rum in the mess.

Had a letter today from Jean and Ron who are going to hold a 'Triff' party in my honour on the 29th March – while we are steaming through the 'Bay' (*Bay of Biscay*). They hope I can make it. That's really BIG of them. Oh well I'll be celebrating my boif.......Grog.



Musikaal PT on Flight-Deck



Muizenberg on the east coast of the peninsular

Also had a letter; at long last from Helen. She and a few other nurses are going to celebrate my boif too. Gee that's really great. I'll bet they are all celebrating it in Loftus too.

<u>Tuesday 18-3-69</u> page211

Slipped our berth at 10.00 this morn. A lot of females were down to see the ship off. It was freezing up there. No lumps in my throat. Haa! Aa!

Had good times to remember-----about CT. Could it be due to being almost couth? Almost!

On the last night in, a guy who looked Afro-Asian approached me at the bus-stop.

"Do you want a F—k"?

"No, besides, I don't pay for it"

"No Man, I mean free"

"Sorry, I don't take charity – of that sort"

"Aam a seaman (merchant), I know what it's like for you blokes after a stretch at sea"

"Balls"

"OK! – Yo missing out"

"Yeh'h! OK"

You are taken around a corner where you are either: grabbed, beaten up and rolled; or you may be shown the woman or even allowed to possess her before you get hit.

The ink may be green.....!

(2010 note from Saturday 14th Dec 1968 on the day we arrived in Singapore I changed from writing the journal in black ball-point pen to using a fountain pen utilising green ink).

Page 212

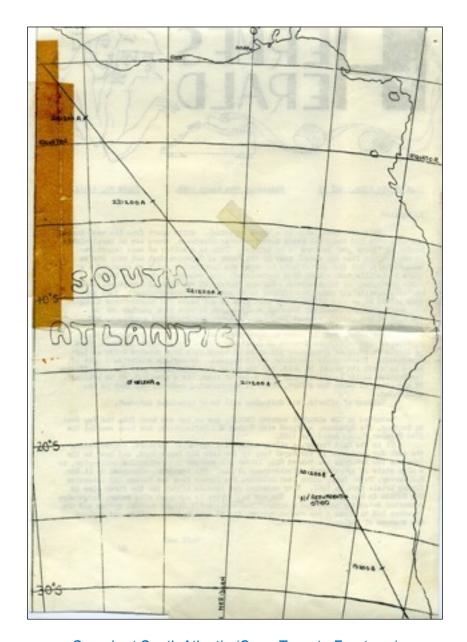


Malay Coconut Picker

Very similar, if not identical to a palm grove on Langkawi.

<u>Saturday 19-03-69</u> page 212

Last night cheese *from the wardroom pantry* was brought down the mess. We had offered Tot for it but the chef said he couldn't touch it as he was suffering a relapse. Good cheese though!



Sea-chart South Atlantic (Cape Town to Freetown)

The chart was folded twice to fit on the page. RAS with RFA Resurgent

Confucious. He say:

- 1) Man who makes love on a hill, him not on level.
- 2) Man who takes a girl into a field, him got piece on earth.
- 3) Japanese girl who flies in aircraft, upside-down will have Honourable crack-up. "Could this be an 'airline crack"?

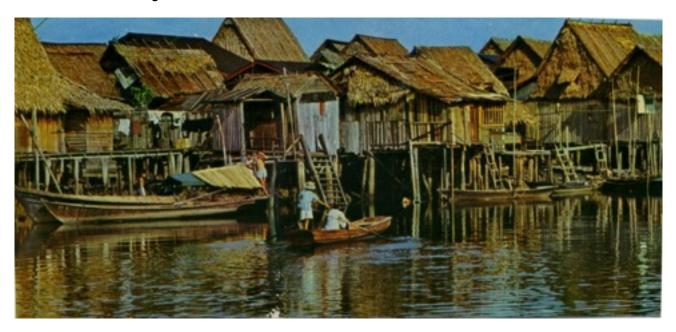
Brush & scrub, scrub and paint, - secure. We are preparing the workshop for skipper's rounds.

An article of note was placed by the editor of the Hermes Herald on the reverse side of the sea-chart on page 212

"Embarked in the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes, now on her way back from the Far East to Britain, 814 Squadron, equipped with Wessex Mk3 Helicopters, has been awarded the FAA's Premier Flying Award for 1968.

It is The Boyd Trophy, a silver model of a Swordfish aircraft, commemorating the work for aviation in the Royal Navy by the late Sir Denis Boyd, and goes to the squadron for bringing the Wessex Mk3, latest all-weather ant-submarine helicopter, to a high state of operational effectiveness at sea. The Squadron, commanded by Lt. Cdr. M. J. Harvey, R N, since last October, was formed from the Wessex Mk3 Intensive Flying Trials Unit in 1967. They embarked for service afloat for the first time in HMS Hermes in May of last year. The new helicopter is equipped with Radar, long-range submarine detecting Sonar and a sophisticated automatic flight control system, and the Squadron had to prove a new weapon system, fitted into current tactics and explore new avenues of tactical employment."

Page 213



River dwelling in Straits - Singapore



<u>Dulang Washers – Ipoh - Perak</u>

Three women washing the waste material to get tin ore at the Vinta River.

The white pouches they are wearing are for holding the ore.

Most of the rivers of Perak are tin bearing.

Typical rural area, vegetable farm of Singapore.

The farmers depend on the canals to water their vegetables.



Vegetable farm - Singapore



Bullock carts on the way to town to sell wares.

Bullock Carts - Malacca

<u>Thursday 20-03-69</u> page 214

Still scrubbing and painting. We're putting on quite a new appearance in W/S.

Great news! My correspondence-course came through by jackstay transfer last night from *RFA Resurgent* and I had it by Stand-Easy today. I tackled the Computer & Logic lessons and found them very interesting. My A-level maths will probably be put on, at the end of these two.

SOC tell me that for each potential student who is inducted to the SOC; that I arrange for them I will be granted £1 as credit off my balance of payments (my Boy!). I tried to sell a course to Bob Fyles – he says he's too old.

Friday 21-03-69 page 214

7 days to my Boif! and still scrubbing & painting. Tomorrow should show results – a glimmer of hope.

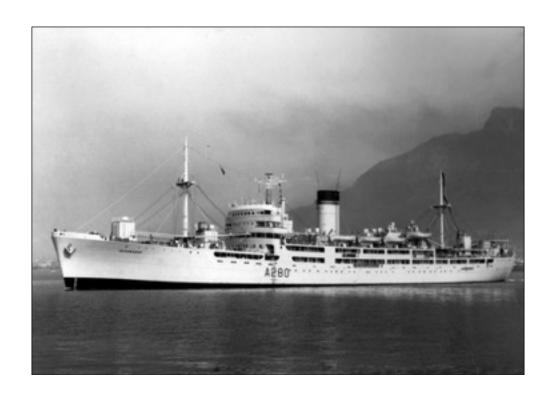
On with my course, really triff.

Played volley-ball for AED 'A' team. The team is invalid and so considering new faces we played and lost against Weapons 'L' with a hard fight. It was a good match.

The river folk



Hong-Kong



RFA Resurgent A280 Armament replenishment ship



Malay padi farmer ploughing the padi field with his buffalo; The only source of power.

Ploughing a padi field - Penang

Thursday night Friday morn's, Thought for the Day:

Confucious He say:

Man who go to bed, on own, with sex problems on his mind wake up with sticky solution on chest!

A resting hut of the Botanical Gardens.

This garden is very popular during the evenings for a family stroll.



Botanical Gardens - Singapore



Singa's

The red tiled building on the right is the Government House



Chinese Mainland

Kowloon's Golden Mile.

A stretch of Nathan Road in Mongkok district.

Two miles up the tip of the Kowloon Peninsula.

Glows at night with a range of neon lights

<u>Saturday 22-03-69</u> page 216

The weather today was a touch of the tropic-equatorial stuff. The deck burned the skin at a touch, as I found out the hard-way, when I was taking my bronzy sesh's.

I took part in two volley-ball matches; won one as a seemingly awarded gift. The other, we lost with a good fight but too many careless mistakes were made.

Tug-O-War, by dept. on the F/D this aft'. It was a farce but entertaining. I went along as a spectator and found myself at the No 5 position on the rope

"TaketheStrain"

Thinks, "perhaps too many contestants had pulled themselves before pulling the rope"

A good many people were spread-eagled on blankets over the deck; tanning in the extreme. White bodies up from the Engine-Room and the Galley will be burnt red and peeling tomorrow or the next.

'Am very enthusiastic about my correspondence course; went up to the school-room just after supper and......continued next page.

Busy traffic on Nathan Road



page 217 Oink!



The Sultan Mosque

......clean forgot about, Heads and Rounds tonight. I had to report to the Reg' Office.

Hank thought it very funny – at my expense as I keep telling him I'm infallible to "dropping in it" and tonight it was a Commander doing rounds.

Well,......I went up and told Bungy I was studying ("That's a bloody feeble excuse isn't it"?) Any excuse is better than no excuse; 'spose.

I had to clean the heads FINI

Today's thought; from Schotland!

A "Cheese n' 'Am Sarnie (Jim's)

Sunday 23-03-69 page 217

AED 'A' Deck-Hockey: we are through to the finals.

Today's thought; from Wales!

Wales for the 'Triple Crown' (Dolly's)

Easy day

Took my first test in Logic; in the school-room, but the SRE was 'on' then; with machinery throbbing. The place acquired DT's. (shaking associated with excessive alcohol consumption <u>Delirium Tremors</u>)

Blue movie was shown in the mess; not bad but torture to my soul.

These movies were spools of celluloid run through a projector and projected up onto a fabric screen which was held like a roller-blind in a cylinder with attached folding tri-pod stand. The film could not be stopped and held at a fixed point without the risk of the heat of the lamp burning a hole in the film, but I think that the movie could be run in reverse which would add to the entertainment factor of those watching.



Typical Malay "kampong" house of Malacca; it is usually found in the rural areas.

page 218



Somewhere in the Far-East?

All of these small pictures set in tables are the cut-off portion of books of post-cards which we purchased ashore in both Hong Kong and Singapore. (I've no idea where the scene is)

Monday 24-03-69 page 218

The section looks like a doll's-house. I've never seen it or any other AOS looking so 'spit and polished'. I think 'Wiggy' (*Lt Bennett the replacement for Lt Penfold in our dept*) is brown-nosing his way to perhaps another half-ring on his sleeve. The bum! Since coming aboard he has accomplished nothing for either the division, the section, AED or the ship. He has a permanent alcoholic flush. He doesn't recognise the lads when he meets them; "Bombed-Out".

Medical research has developed a new kind of tranquilizer; it doesn't put you to sleep, it just makes you enjoy the tension. (Aha!).

Mail went by *Aurora* (*HMS Aurora*) to Freetown this morning and with it went my first test paper; on its way to Reading, Berks.

We were accompanied for about an hour by a whale – all spout. It would dive and a few seconds later reappear 100yds or so ahead.



Page 218

Hong-Kong
View overlooking Tiger-Balm, toward Victoria.



Night festivity illuminating Singapore

The rear of the card states the celebration was the 1st anniversary of Singapore.





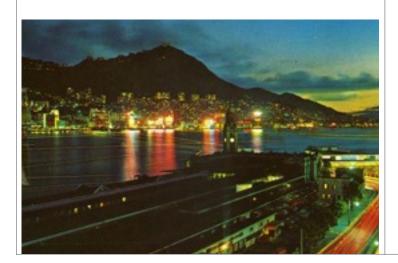
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Singapore City

The recently re-constructed car park and roofgarden at Raffles Place with two waterfountains and a special flower clock Evening scene of HK Island viewed from Causeway Bay, overlooking the Typhoon shelter and yacht-club; with Wanchai's bloodshot red-lights and the Central district in the background.





Honky – Tonk by night.

Some Chinese characters copied from the card

Festival occasion.



Kai Tak airport.



Kai Tak runway points toward a communist (armed) held island in the harbour. Any military a/c can and will be shot-down if it flies over the island. Legally that is! Regulations demand that our aircraft then, veer away immediately after take-off. A Buccaneer with a full payload could 'write-off the island by bluffing a land-on then revolving the bomb-bay and opening up to sub-sonic speed and gently toss it's payload at a pre-determined target on the island; - Gen! Caput.

<u>Tuesday 25-03-69</u> page 221

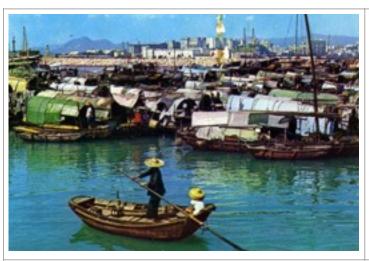
The Skipper is to be promoted to Rear Admiral on the 7th July He is to take his new appointment as Assistant Chief of Staff Operations and Air at MOD in mid-July.

The Hermes will then be captained by Capt. BM Austin RN who is at present doing a staff job in the United States.

Make and Mends from today and as often as poss' each day back to POMPEY.

Thought for t' day – "What is H.A.G.? (2010 Yes "Just what is it")?

Max temp 29°C - 84°F Min 23°C - 73°F Sea temp: 81°F



Singapore

Sampans and their owners moored in the Causeway Shelter

Busy street scene HK





I had a few monochrome prints made during the commission which were in mirror image form and I accepted them as wrong as a fact of life.

The ease of correcting such errors with the computer exists and I have changed some but I shall leave this photo as it appears.

Repulse Bay from The Peak (in reverse 'mirror image')

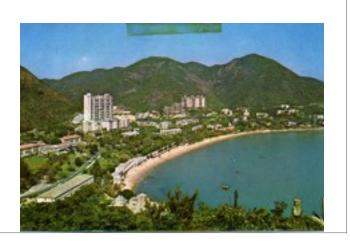


Dragon Dance New Territories. Honkers

Page 223

Repulse Bay with HK's best known beach is situated on the southern side of HK island. Facing out to the, South China Sea

The Repulse Bay hotel with its red tile roof is at the left; and residential apartment buildings are scattered along the curving hillsides.



Hong-Kong

Night view overlooking Central district





Tiger Pagoda – Tiger Balm Gardens Hong Kong

Page 224

Central District HK





Guess the deliberate mistake'

China Fleet Club RN behind the 3 Gannets

Centre Gannet is the COD

This is an example of a mirror image which I have now corrected.

The port-side 'side-lift appears as a starboard side construction in the journal

The lifts were chain operated as shown by the vertical lines

The tail rotors of a helo on the lift can be seen.

Page 224 cont'd



Hong-Kong

Re-settlement building. Grossly overcrowded but they provide far better accommodation than offered by the shanty towns from which the tenants have recently left.

Many of the shanties were little more than corrugated tin and a wooden frame on the steep hillsides which a storm could bring down.

Sampan, launch and two Walla-Walla's HK





View of Empress Place, the Town-Hall and the Government Offices Singapore

Mount Faber
A fine tourist spot.
Singapore





Yankee landing craft in HK harbour
Chinese boats are 1) Motorised Junk towing a boat (sampan) side parties. Jenny's ship-side painters.



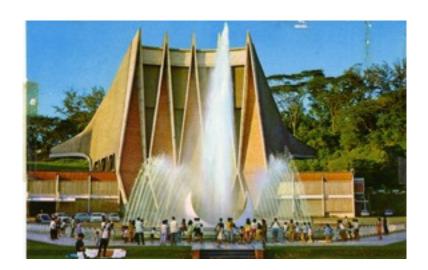
Nerdeka Bridge – Singapore

Built on the Kellang River connecting the Nicholl Highway on one side with Old Kellang Airport on the other.

National Theatre and Water Fountain Situated at the King George V Park of River Valley Road.

Most of the state's cultural shows are held in it.

The water fountain in front of it is the biggest in Singapore.



Wednesday 26-03-69

TheBlondeBitch

HELEN!

My Weak-Link

Dallink!

WA.

Mary had a littlepig.

It wouldn't stop it's grunting,
So I took it down the garden path
and kicked it's little (head in ???)

M R

The ship has just hit a bump – The Tropic of Cancer; I think. Every time we cross over the lines of latitude the ship shakes; most noticeable was the red-line drawn around the circumference. We bounced over it two days back. Going over the equator was great for tanning; and what a colour I have now is all I shall have to take back to UK with me.

Mail by light-jackstay transfer from *Aurora*. There were Boif cards from, Mum, Frances & Mr & Mrs Bolton and a letter from Frances.

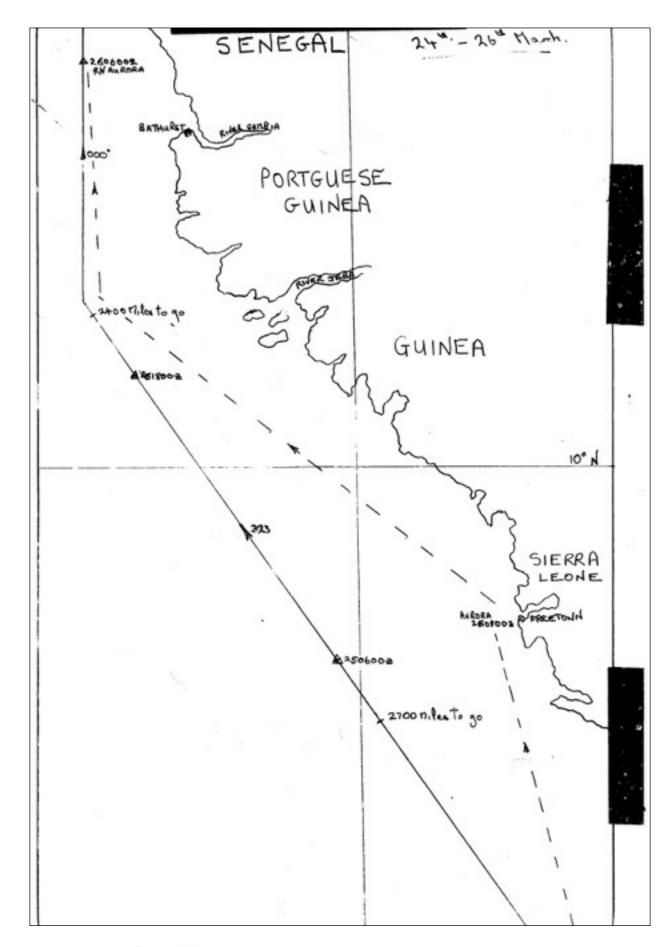
ENLIGHTENMENT!

No news from Scotland.

Mick got letter from Scotland!

Mix a Laxative. Black of course.

Page 228



Page 229

**RFA Resource A 480 Stores (Solid) & Ammunition



"Resource" pulling away from our port-side on completion of a RAS. A woman is living on board her; the CO's wife I think. This is common practice on RAS-ships for the Skipper's wife to accompany him on the sea-legs. 'Lucky Devil' - very comforting though. Another ship is carrying what I would think is the Capt's daughter; Delicious looking - across 60 – 70' of water, as she stands on the bridge.

This is one of the RAS ships that have accompanied us for the entire commish.



Buccaneer Land-on

Taken from the 'Phot-platform'; (a projection deck on the island). The Bucc's attempting a hook-on of one of the three wires traversing the deck. The wires are held clear of the deck by bowsprings which are visible on either side of the Day-Glow centre-line.

The SAR chopper is in its usual position during landing-on stations; off the port stern. From there the pilot can see the complete land-on and in the event of the A/C overshooting and ending-up in the brink he can either hover over the spot or pick-up the crew if they used the escape system.

On the Stbd side Jumbo (the Crash and Salvage mobile crane) can be seen with driver seated waiting for a deck-crash. Although it is manned during every second of every land-on, only twice has it been used in a real emergency; re two land-on's of Vixen which had nose wheel collapses (see page 102: *diary page 102*).

The ship's wake is visible through funnel smoke. Our trail left at this speed is wider than that left by the Queens; this being due to the ships stern being squared-off instead of contoured.

The carrier HMS Victorious was of an old design style and had a round stern.

Thursday 27-03-69

page231

 n^2

The seas are permanently choppy on a heavy swell and are grey-black. We are in the noticeably northern waters.

I turned-to this afternoon in place of 'Spud' (OEM(A) Murphy) so that I can have a make and mend tomorrow; on my Boif.

We are celebrating my boif with a party inside Half-Way-House tomorrow night. Also being celebrated is Dave's (NAM (O) Dave Simkins) boif on the 31st.

Eats and Tariff

Tomatoes (Aussie) 3 lbs Cucumber 1 x 3 x 1 lb tins **Pilchards** 4-5 tins Corned-Beef 20 x legs Chicken 1 1/2 lb jar **Branston Pickle** 6 lbs **Assorted Cheeses** Cream crackers and Butter Qty Qty **Pickled Onions** (French Wine) Mustard 3 x 14 oz tins Herrings 3 doz Boiled-eggs More..... Corned - Dog Qty Oven fresh rolls 24 x 2 (slabs) Cans of beer + 20

Tots of Rum

To be cont'd,page 235



Handler's (Chockheads) on fire crew duties during Helo F/Stations



Sea-Cat missile firing. Ship's Missile System

(HMS Hermes had no 4.5" guns or 40mm Bofors;

just Sea-Cat missiles for self-defence)

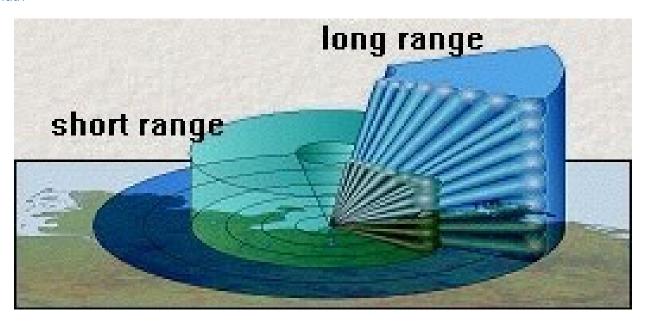
Our Sea-Cat system has never seen real action; apart from which it is far from being infallible. They are our last (2nd to last) resort in an A/C attack. We can first pick-up an enemy on Gannet radar, secondly pick-up on radar of our 984 and take evasive action. 3rd in the event of an A/C getting through our radar screen is Sea-Cat. 4th and last resort is that there is a great deal of 20-man life-rafts placed quite strategically about the ship.

It was the world's first operational shipboard point-defence missile system

Sea Cat was designed by Short Brothers of Belfast for use against fast jet aircraft that were proving to be too difficult for the WWII-era Bofors guns to successfully intercept. Sea Cat is a small, subsonic missile powered by a two-stage solid fuel rocket motor. It is steered in flight by four swept, cruciformly arranged wings and is stabilised by four small tail fins. It is guided by Command Line-Of-Sight (CLOS) via a radiolink; i.e. flight commands are transmitted to it from a remote operator with both the missile and target in sight. Flares on the missile's tail fins aided identifying the missile.

984 Searchlight (dimensional radar)

3D radar provides for radar coverage on three dimensions unlike the more common 2D radar. While the normal 2D radar provides range and azimuth, the 3D radar provides elevation information with range and azimuth



The Gannet AEW3 utilised the AN/APS 20 radar previously installed on the Grumman Avenger AEW.but this radar first saw service in the Douglas Skyraider AEW1 in 1952 and went on to be used in the Shackleton AEW until1991

Amen: Pronounced - Ah Men!

The photo at the bottom of the page depicts a group of Catamytes

- Q) "What do you like for breakfast?"
- A) "I like live sausages"

- Q) "Why do you Chew Wriggley's gum"
- A) "I chew anything that wriggles"

"Let me take you home; and I'll make

You very happy"

- Q) "Do you smoke?"
- A) "No but I do like to chew cigars"



KAI-TAI \$25 each - All nighters

The Kai-Tai were a feature of Singapore night-life and they operated, ran and self-policed the Bhugis Street.

Men who dressed as women, (transvestites) but plied the prostitute trade.



Cape Town HMS Hermes centre left with aircraft ranged.

Page 235

Cont'd 1 x ENCASED PINT POT

Order of the Boot ?!!! ?

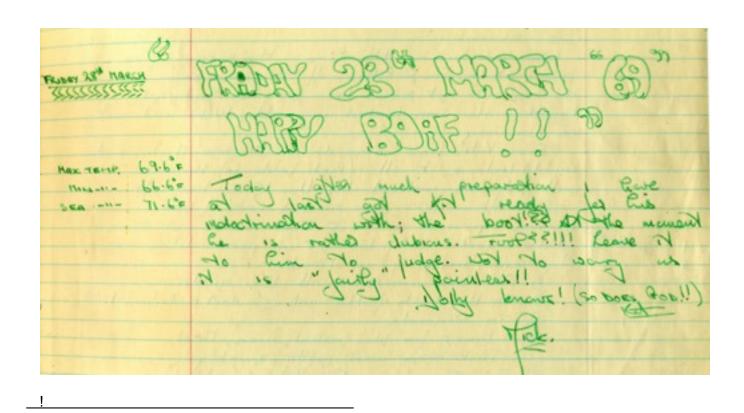
ADVERTS:

For All Party Accessories See.

OH! SHORT FAT HAIRY '1' (CHUBS) - SAN

End of the adverts:

Thought for the Day - (Dolly)
All Homosexuals are Beef! (Argue That Dear)!



Saturday 29-03-69 Reminiscences of yesterday

We got the eating and drinking off to a start at about 19.30. I was almost thrown out of the Caboose, before hand so that Dolly and Mick could prepare everything. Dave was thrown out with me, so we wandered about the ship. Lads handed me a few cans of beer before the others started.

Once we were all seated (me and Dave next to the table) we had the cameras out to take photos - while we were still looking couth and the 'spread' of food had not been attacked.

The 'Order of the boot' was off. It is a normal boot – usually the owners and a pint pot is placed inside – to be later topped up with the 'Boif Drink' With that done the entire boot is iced and decorated. Mick tried to get it but the Wardroom chef's had Skippers rounds. Instead............

Page 236

We had a fruit-cake. (Never fail)

Everyone got tucked into cheeses with tit-bits on sticks. We all started on the beer – first, while I and Dave had to share out a bottle of Rum. We didn't get French mustard but the chef turned up with more lb's of cheeses and a few pounds of smoked ham and even more lb's of sliced beef.



The Birthday Bash

Left front to rear: Gusty Blowers, Paul Cox, Jim Henderson, Dave Simkins Right front to rear: Dick Malfin, George Lacey, Kit Colbeck, Fred (Dolly) Gray Centre: Martin (Mick) Rodgers

There were no candles for the cake and someone put 19 matches into a boiled-egg ('nish'). Using a lighter it lit-up like a fire cracker. I managed to eat the egg after blowing the matches out; 'in one'.

We finished eating 3hrs later though we never finished the food; which will be sorted for another rainy day – the 29th seems like being wet. Ah Hah!

We had during the time of – 'the happening' a few visitors. Frank Collins off 893 came down in the hope to get some beer for his Sqdn get together. He was 'lashed-up' with wets and sent on his way.

Jim Kilcullen (NAM (AE) Jim (Killer) Kilcullen) came down to see Mick and couldn't believe it all - (rich foods ie) He was well fed and watered by the time he left.

Just after 21.00 our second crate of beer turned up and with it two roast chickens. Chats Harris unfortunately brought-up personalities so I kept bringing up 'Toasts':

- 1) For Mick arranging all the gubbins.
- 2) To the death of the cat (I don't remember that)

- 3) To stewards
- 4) A toast for the fastest, ever, toast.

 That one went pretty quickly.
- 5) For Jim being Scottish (Sheez!)

The cameras came-out again; this time we didn't look quite so couth – downright 'dregs' probably – that we'll know when the slides come back.

'Slides': Film converted to acetate colour slides for showing on a screen using a projector; the film had to be sent away by post to Kodak or Agfa. Kodak film was good for emphasising reds and yellows, while Agfa film was better for emphasising blues and greens.

The whole evening went-off well and I think each of us thoroughly enjoyed it.

It's the thing we should have done at the very beginning of the commish.

I was the last to turn-in as I went up to the coolers and washed everything down with 3 pints of water. I woke up this morning with my mouth fresh.

Making the most of this year lad, as it's my last one as a teenager. Don't want all the 'Oldies' to grow-up, on their own.



AED PHOTO TAKEN ON THE AFT LIFT

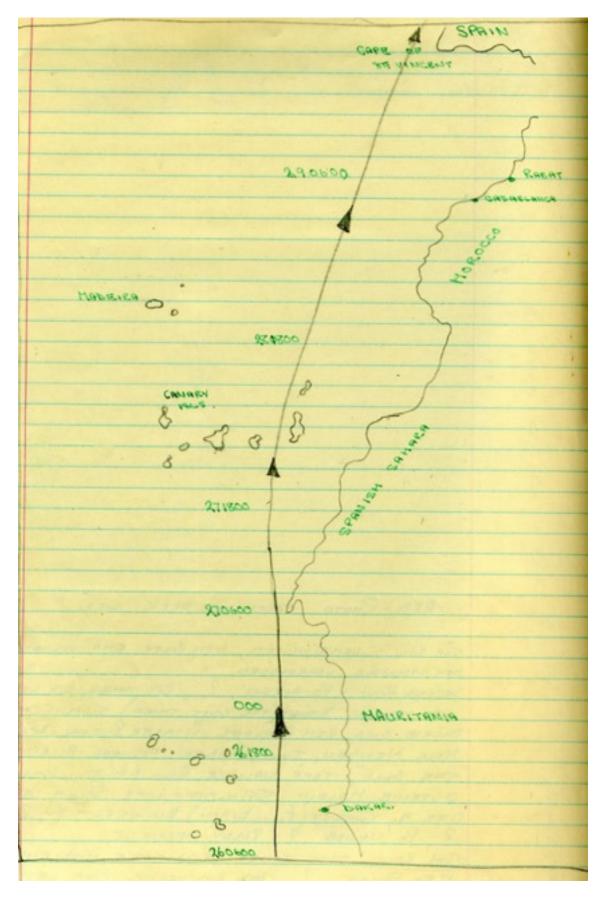
TOP ROW: LEM(A) Willetts, NAM Rolfe, EMA Culshaw, OEM Osborne, OEM Stockdale, NAM Ramsden. **SECOND ROW**: PO Aitken,(?), CPO Hands, CPO Stracken, LAM Hoskins, NAM Gray (Dolly the boot thief), Slim Rutter, Me – NAM Colbeck, OEM Dickie Bird, REM Russant, Bomber Brown, Donnelly, NAM (Plum) Gasson, Mick Newman, Julia Sanders, (Fishead) Allen, George (Pinkie) Lacey, "The Blob", Taff Wallace, Bill Bailey, Scouse Parker, LAM Dick (Queenie) Malfin, LOEM (Spin-Off) Loft, LOEM (Brum) Hay, LOEM Mick (Bondi) Beech, OEM (Gusty) – [F.....Dimmo] Blowers, Bob Woodman, Ching (Ching-Ching), (?), PO Hendry, (?), Paddy Herridge,

THIRD ROW: (Taff) Jones, (Paddle-arse) Middlemass, Couchman, CPO Perry, (?), CPO (O) Ted Batchelor, (Taff) Lewis, Albert, CREA Smart, (Wiggey) Bennet, (?), (?), (?), (Scouse) McDonald, (The Brain), (Shiner) Wright, (?), CPO Mortimer,

<u>FOURTH ROW</u>: (Darby) Allen, (Ducky) Hands, CPO Portman, CPO Dyer, (?), Lt Newton, Lt Cdr Daykin, Commander Hardy(AEO), (Cline) Pattison, Lt Sell, Lt Bennett, CAA(O) Bob Fyles, CREA Eales, CREA Woods, CPO Mick Culkin, CPO (Granny) Tibbs

<u>FIFTH ROW:</u> Henry Hill, (Jock) Hamilton, Frank Lantsberry, NAM(O) Dennis McAlhone, NAM (Black Rodge San) Rodgers, LREM Parker, NAM (Geldige) Gelder, (Henry) Higgins, OEM (Spud) Murphy, NAM (Sharky) Ward, NAM ('Arry) Travers.

The year 2010 I notice that there is between the second and third stated rows another half-line of ten people and though I recognise a couple of faces I cannot put names to any of them today.



Over the SRE 28th
We have left the Canaries behind as they couldn't keep up.



Leaving Fremantle 27th Feb 1969

Shows: The Swan River meandering in-country.

Also showing is the railway line across which Mick and Me on Thursday morn (before 07.00) walked along – Bombed-Out burbling, Zub Zub......Zub, Zub. We willed the ship to sink (nothing happened) so we went and 'condensed the fog' between the bridge and the buildings directly in front of it.

With only three more days remaining at sea there was to be little left of the ship's movements to report on and as we left the sunshine latitudes behind and conditioned ourselves to: a cooler climate, colder dark sea, wearing long trousers, disembarking the squadrons and an arrival at Portsmouth where the Ships Company would largely leave to not return, there was a sense that the adventure coming to a close.

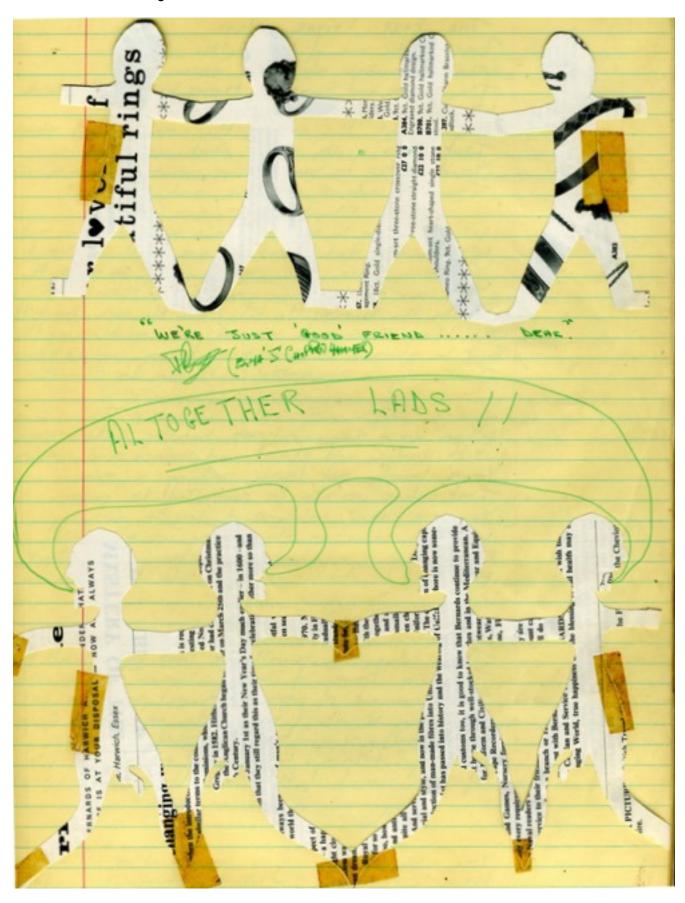
There are a few more days to record but everyone in the Caboose was familiar with this journal and some wished to make a contribution before it was 'closed-off'. What follows is a selection of poems, cartoons and odds and sods followed by photos that never got placed in the journal in the most appropriate place.

THE LONELY SEA & SKY

I must go down to the seas again
To the glorious seas and the sky
So that I may drink to my heart's content,
Neat Gin and a bottle of Rye.
And all I ask is a Make and Mend
And maybe a crate of Scotch,
And a friendly patrol to bring me off'
And an Oppo to keep my Watch'.

I must go down to the sea again, With Tall ships running by, And volunteers for a foreign port' Where morals don't apply, And all I ask is a maiden fair. And a night out on The Peak, And a quiet spot, out of the way. And fortnightly pay, once a week.

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THE FOUR LETTER WORD

Banish the use of the four-letter words
Who's meanings are never obscure,
The Angles and Saxons, those bawdy old birds,
Were vulgar, obscene and impure,
But cherish the use of the weak-kneed phrase,
That never quite says what you mean,
You'd be better be known for your hypocrite ways
Than be vulgar, impure and obscene.

When nature is calling, plain speaking is out, When ladies; God Bless 'em, are milling about, You may, 'wee-wee', 'make water', or 'empty the glass', You can 'powder your nose', even 'Jonnie' may pass, Shake the dew off the lily, See the man about the dog, Or when everyone's soused, it's 'Condensing the fog', But be pleased to remember if you would know, bliss, That only in Shakespeare do characters ----.

When your dinners are hearty with onions and beans, With garlic and Claret and bacon and greens, Your bowels get busy making a gas, That nature insists be permitted to pass, You are very polite and try to exhale, Without noise or odour (you usually fail), Expecting a zephyr, you frequently start, For even a 'deafer' would call it a ----.

A woman has bosoms, a bust or a breast, Those lily-white swellings that bulge 'neath her vest, They are 'towers of ivory', 'sheaves of new wheat', In a moment of passion, 'sweet apples to eat', You may speak of her nipples as 'small rings of fire', With hardly a question of raising her ire, But by Rabelais' Beard will she throw fits, If you speak of them roundly as 'good honest ----'.

You may speak of 'a movement' or 'sit on a seat', Have 'a passage', or 'stool', or 'simply excrete', Or say to others, "I'm going out back", And groan in pure joy in that smelly old shack, You can go 'lay a cable', or do 'Number two', Or sit on the toidy and make a 'do-do', But ladies and men who are socially fit, Under no provocation must, 'go for a ----'.

It's a 'cavern of joy' you are thinking of now, A 'warm tender field' just waiting the plough, It's a 'quivering pigeon', caressed in your hand, Or the National Anthem that makes us all stand, Or perhaps it's a 'flower', a 'grotto',or 'well', The 'hope of the world' or a 'velvety hell', But friend heed this warning, beware the affront, Of apeing a Saxon, don't call it a '----'.

Though a lady repel your advance, she'll be kind, Just as long as you intimate, what's on your mind, You may tell her 'you're hungry', 'you need to be swung', You may ask her 'to see how your etchings are hung', You may mention the 'ashes that need to be hauled', 'Put the lid on the saucepan'; (lay isn't too bald), But the moment you're forthright get ready to duck, The girl isn't born yet who'll stand a "Let's ----'.

So banish the words that Elizabeth used,
When she was Queen on the throne,
The modern maid's virtue is easily bruised,
By the four letter words when used all alone,
Let your morals be loose as an Alderman's vest,
As long as the language you use is obscure,
Today not the act but the word is the test,
Of the vulgar, obscene and impure.

A young boy was asked, in class to differentiate between prose and poetry.

Young boy replied;

"There was once a woman, who lived in Cottom, went into the sea up to her ankles."

"That's prose", he said, "but if the sea had three feet deeper it would have been poetry".

Had none of the 'morning after the night before' effects, thanks to those pints of water. I was up during the night for another pint too, to make sure of waking up fresh.

Everyone - in general, is chuffed to be only 3 days out of Pompey. Cleaner atmosphere is sensed.

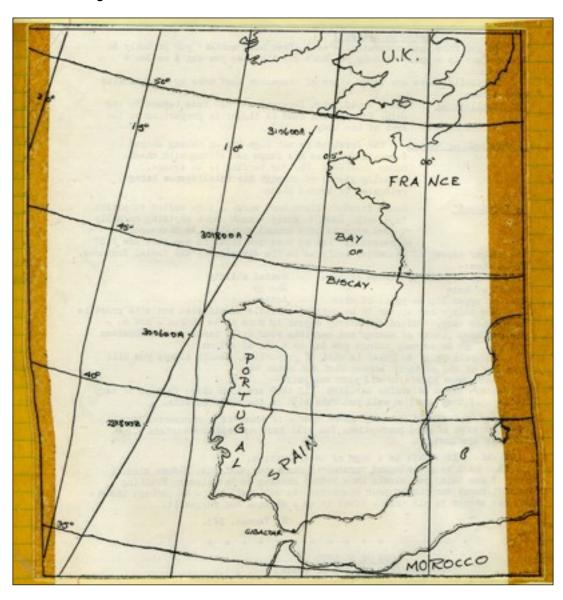
I was up on deck this morn' for a drop of 'fresher's; the weather reminded me of Lossie. Dickie (*Alan Bird*) said it reminded him of Yeovil. Even more coincidental was that Stockers (*Kev Stockdale*) who'd just come up came across and said the weather reminded him of Brawdy. A brief weather description is in place here. There was a bitter wind blowing across the barren deck (much like a runway) and the sun was very watery looking; the sky was fairly overcast.

Nearly everyone is wearing long trousers now; - they were made optional yesterday. The sea is still darkgrey to black and very choppy owing to the wind. We started walking up forrard and were just alongside the front of the 'island' when a 20' (above the deck) Goffa of spume curled up over the bows and started toward us, - we turned and fled.



B30

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Sunday 30-03-69

page 245

2 DAYS TO GO!!

Temperature Max – 59.0°F

Min - 53.6°F

Sea Temp 60.1°F

Sign outside a clinic:

"FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION - ENTRANCE IN THE REAR"

We all had to get up on time this morning for payment (no money) routine as we've received a signal from MOD (Navy) to say we are only entitled to two Blue-Liner coupons instead of the six we were previously issued with, which would, previously allow us 600 cigs.

(I did not smoke but registered for my issue of coupons which could be exchanged for cigarettes or pipe tobacco to take home or to sell to smokers for cash). I recall taking home and my Dad being delighted with, some 'Balkan Sobranie' pipe tobacco.

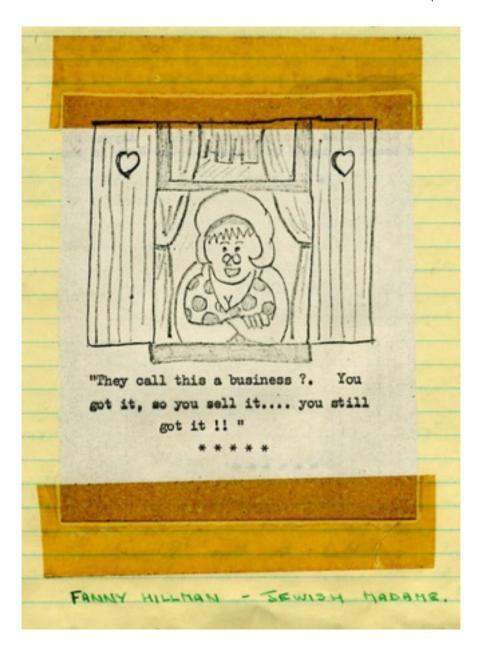
12.00 The Bucc's were run-up and 12 mins later Helo 75 took flight as Plane Guard while 5 of the 7 Bucc's were launched. I was on last min negs (*Last Minute Negatives*) and found it quite cool up there even with an anorak on. I was required only in the event of any immediate trouble occurring in flight.

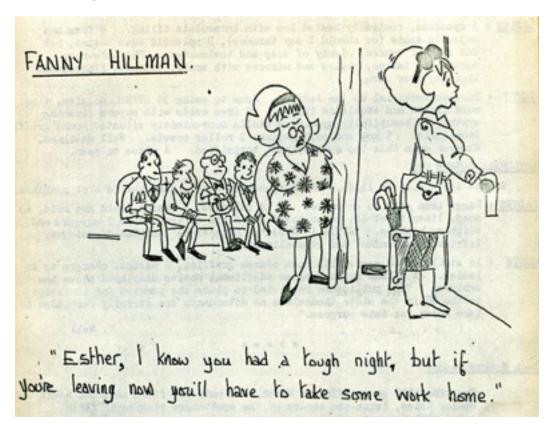
Just before 15.00 we received a signal from Lossie to the effect that all 5 had landed safely. At 16.00 the remaining two were catapulted-off; 234 going last. Skrodski, one of 801's pilots was waved a farewell, by 801 hands all holding-up two fingers to encourage the launch.

At the time we started F/Stations we were just entering 'The Bay' and oddly enough the sea, apart from choppiness was calm with negligible swell.

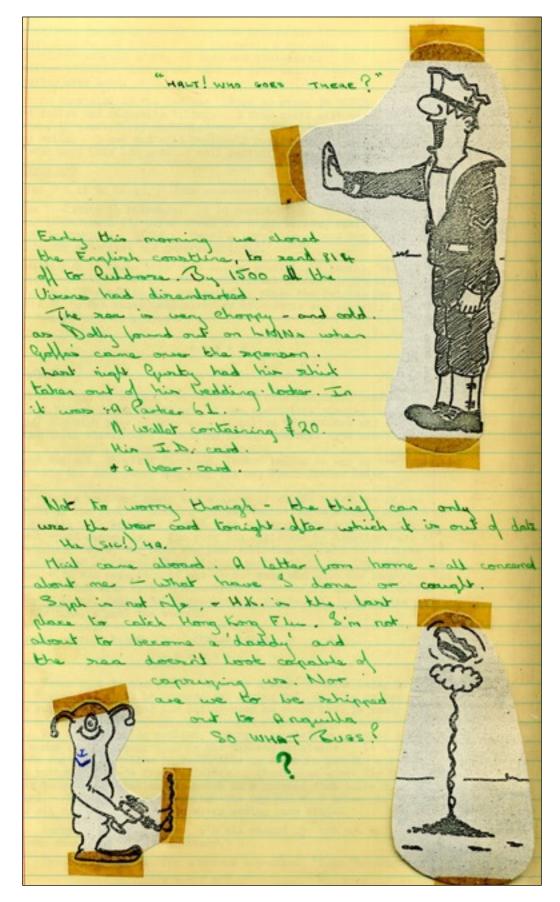
Owing to various misunderstandings earlier in the Commission it has been firmly established that Colbeck (CT) is a raving nut <u>and</u> not as otherwise stated

Anon (Mick's writings)







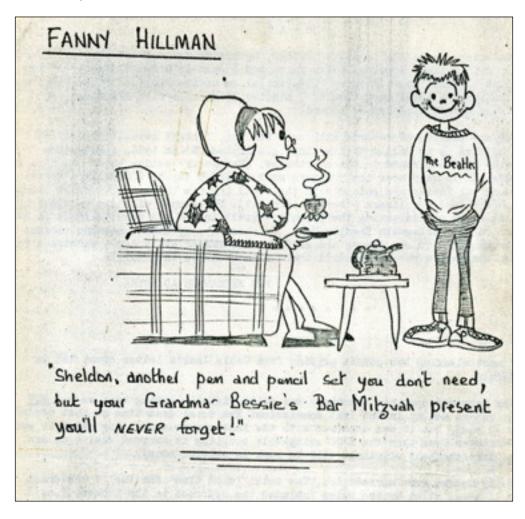


I learned that the 'concern' for me resulted, following a post-card I had sent home with a Shakespearean mis-quoted Soliloquy.

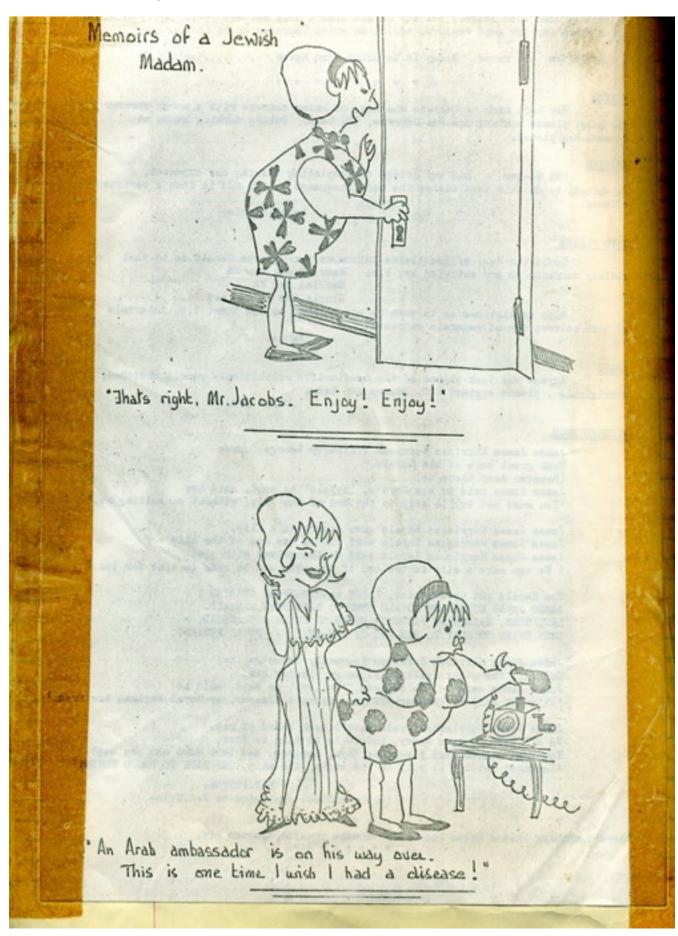
TB or not TB, that is the question,

But Consumption be done about it.

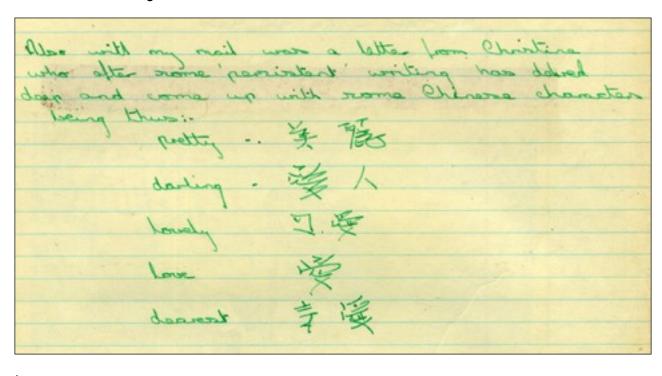
2016 and I don't recall how the rhyme ended, but the bard's end with "to die to sleep"







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HMS Hermes cost the ratepayers 7^d for every foot it moves. (which is cheaper than a mini.??) (NOT)

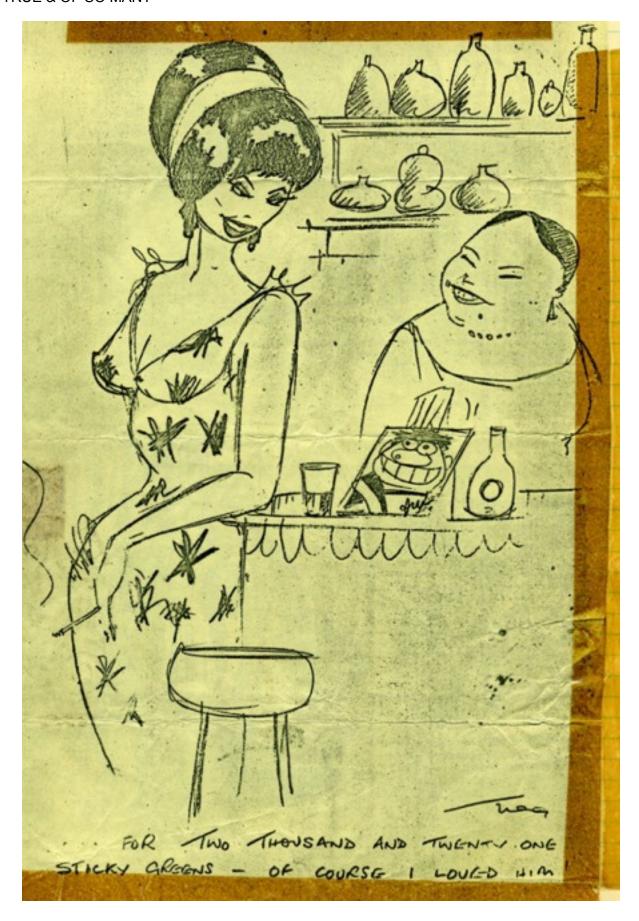
No mail from Helen. Films are back from Agfa – colour slides; some of them are not bad considering them to be my first bash at colour on that camera. Anna came out well.

Records! The ship has travelled 72,802 miles; almost three times around the world & each shaft has turned 79,000,000,000,000 times. ----- Oh!

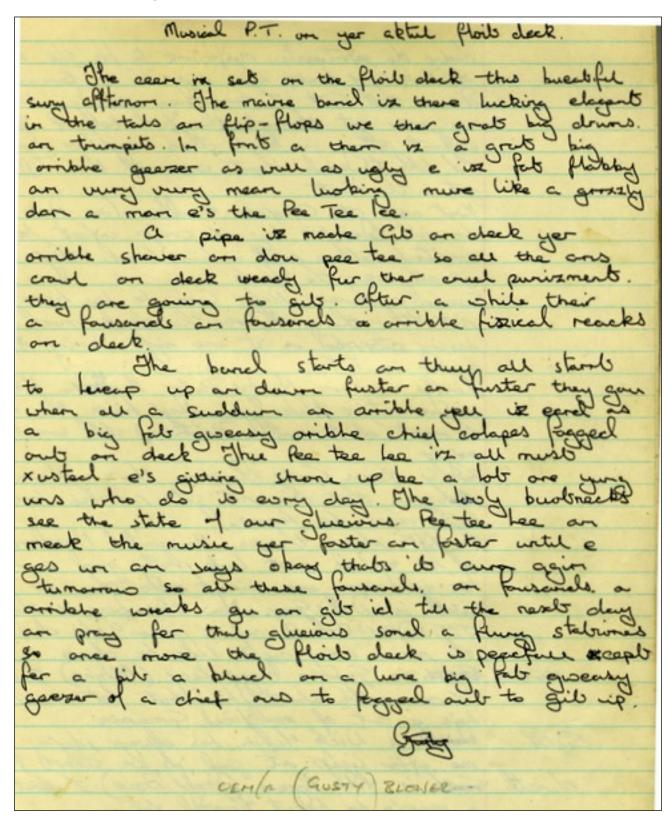
Tuesday 01-04-69 APRIL FOOL'S DAY

Having arrived last night we anchored-off Spithead, Berth 5 until this morning (Brass-monkey weather). There were hundreds of people down to meet the ship and subsequently hundreds on board the ship among whom were Mr and Mrs McAlhone, who remembered me from GANGES.

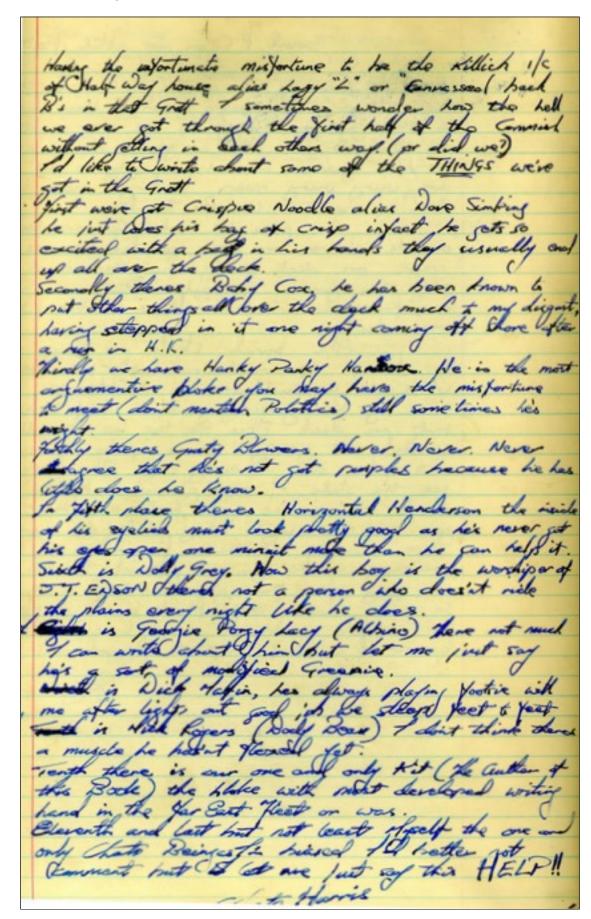
H.M.S. G.A.N.G.E.S. Her Majesty Says Girls Are Not Getting Enough Sex.



253 THE PALOUSTE SECTION. in this book to air the views as one of the most important sections on board. No kid! It is was not for the section (above named) figure on one off the thorough section (above named) figure on the "H" would be not extremely the "H" would ame to extreme hard work analy entree coople; one do extreme hard werk uncled endremely adverse conditions by always people; one walf, on LAY and an El El. No less. We have, at last count, you paloneters. I wo of them are resurced fer flying only. One of them is a fit 17A and I will have and insert much the main inference for this is that the wait (814 Soph) obtained that it was to beavy to push around the deck Atthough in the same breath they stated that on no account was any other equadren to use it yealone? I was all you mathematicans a grand total of sever for daily use. the purpose of one of these machinics in the purpose of one of these machinics or the amendance of the current of the pressure and the ale of the current of The reason a partourle is used is The reason a parable is used is because if an internal shorter should be were decreed the reduction georgia from I have all world put a problem of weight to the designers and an entruly new acrest would have to be build. So as you can see it would be will. So as you can see it would be suited to g use a paloriste. I much easied to g use a paloriste is much easied to g use a paloriste as they are wear economical as they are wear any cil. Faintenance is only med and having any cil. Faintenance is only med and having of the engine. Auxing of the engine. the phase of this commission their life expectancy ran out in November some sharps these been rather recurrent since Christmas. Atthough now it is all behind as and I can honestly say that in all mordesty. I have not that in all mordesty. I have not thank a doubt magnificent!!

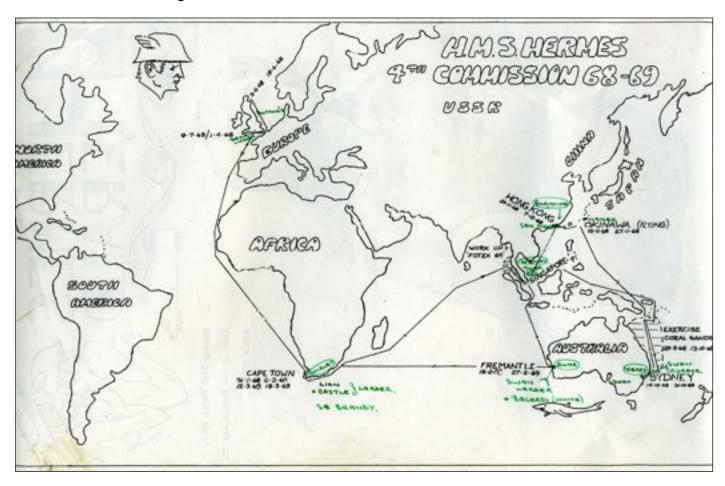


OEM (A) Gusty BLOWERS



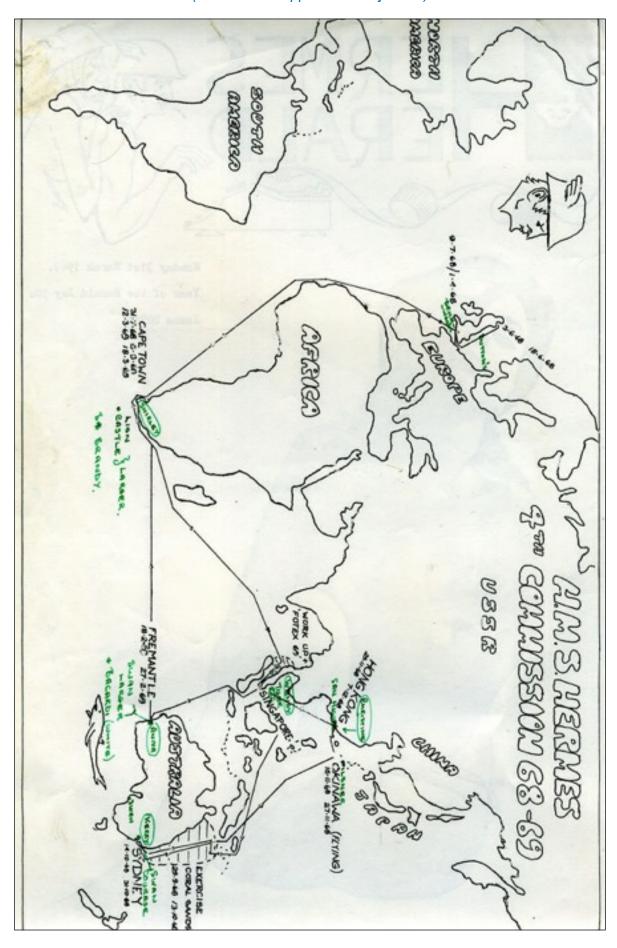
LAM (O) Chats HARRIS

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World guide to attractions and distractions for an 18 year old sailor (drinks and company)

The English beers noted were Duttons [Yorkshire] and Brickwoods [Pompey]



HOME!! (or is't)

Hank's missus Christine came aboard with David; the nipper - looks a bit taller.

I'm duty today; received a huge boif card from Helen. Also a letter from home!



CLEARVIEW _ S. AUSTRALIA. KATHY

Kathy Hancox [Hanks sister] who lived in Adelaide. Who we visited [ref. page 120].

<u>Wednesday 02-04-69</u> page 258

Half the ship is on leave, which makes for quiet.

There are two A/C on board; a Vixen U/S and the COD about to be loaded onto a lighter and be taken to Lee-on the Solent

Meals are gash!!!

Had news from Reading. "Why aren't my payments up to date" – (Sheez we've been to sea). I don't mind it being adrift and just to upset their books I'll send this month's late too. To put this petulant response of mine into perspective is to know that in 1969 credit cards were not in current use and like most contemporaries I did not have a bank account so Standing Orders and Direct Debits or even a chequebook were unknown to me. As a young sailor I was paid in cash once a fortnight and any savings were paid in from the Navy's paymaster direct to the Post-Office. Everyone in those days had a Post-Office Savings Book (POSB pronounced Pozz-Bee). In an earlier reference (diary entry page 86) to get money back the book had to be sent to Harrogate; made-up with hand entered records of payments received and

accrued interest added and then sent back by post. Postal payment would have been by Postal-Order with postage stamps up to the value required I think.

Had to stay on board doing a sub' for Dick Malfin to make some money.

Duty again today.

Lt Penfold came down to the ship for his rabbits. Looks well – but he's lost all his tan. I was the only person in the mess to get a letter today; it was from Wendy (Susan Tan) with a photie included – does her an injustice but pretty good.



Susan Tan from the Oriental Bar, Singapore



I'm on week-end from 08.00 tomorrow. 'am taking up my record-player to Nuneaton, - the Old Dears can collect it sometime.

WEEK-END THANK JC

This was the last textual entry made by me in the Journal

HMS Hermes 4 th Commission

What follows is a collection of photographs and cards taken at various times and locations during the trip.



Manly Beach Hydrofoil Sydney Harbour October 1968



Sydney Harbour Bridge and the New Opera house Far left Australia house (rotating cafe) 1968



Garden Island - Sydney Australia 1968



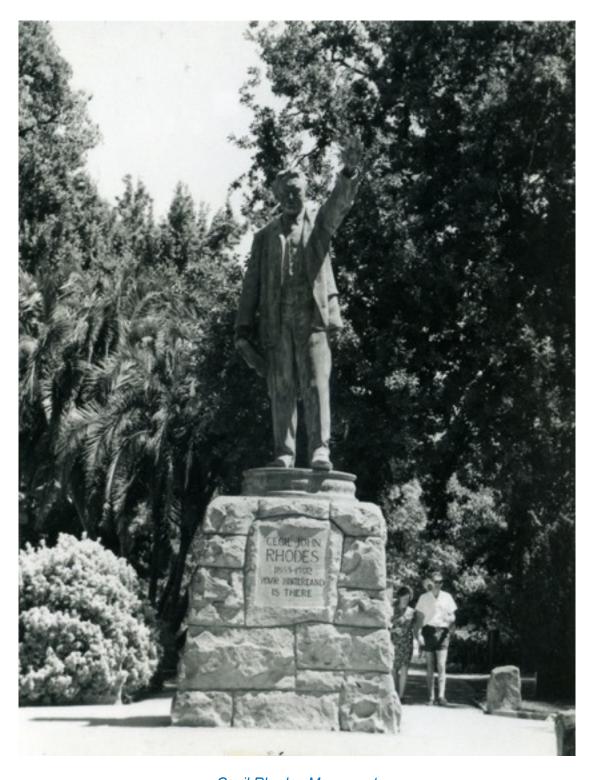
El-Alamein Fountain Kings Cross Sydney 1968



A tree (Aussie variety)

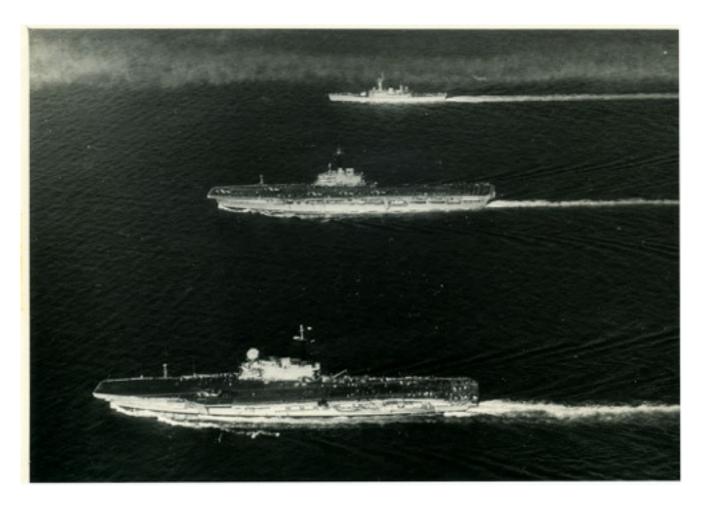
Botanical Gardens

Overlooking Sydney Harbour 1968



Cecil Rhodes Monument

Cape Town 1st – 5th August 1968



HMS Hermes (previous) 3rd Commission



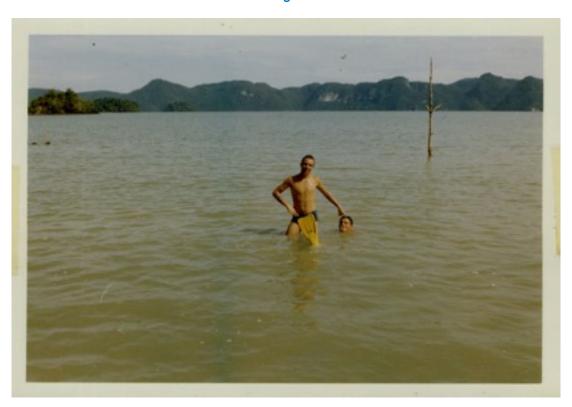
HMS Hermes (previous) 3rd Commission

Procedure Alpha full line out of aircraft and crew on the flight-deck

Possibly Australia, circa 1967



Vance (on the right) Pulau Langkawi 1968



Keith St Aubyn 801 Sqdn standing and Mick Rodgers Langkawi 1968

Saint was in the same class and mess-deck as me at HMS Ganges 1965-1966. He had a great personality and could be sure of being happy and up-beat when the rest of the guys were low.



Banana boat Langkawi 1968



Langkawi 1968



To Dai

I came to, to find myself in a small badly-lit room. It was so small that I could touch all four walls with the tips of my fingers from where I sat. Was this the new world that we had all been dreading for so long? I thought. Had I slept through the final catastrophe only to wake up in a world where each individual was kept in his own small room? Would I be let out at some time to work or eat? But as my eyes grew used to the darkness I saw something that amazed me. The door was locked from the inside. What devilish form of torture was this? Were the people that run the world daring me to come out and see it for myself? Then slowly, slowly, it all came back to me, I remembered exactly where I was, and was that not the soft smooth perforated roll of paper on the floor to prove it.

Example of bits and dits supplied by the crew for publishing in the Hermes Herald

BURMA CO.

CURIOS & JEWELLERY

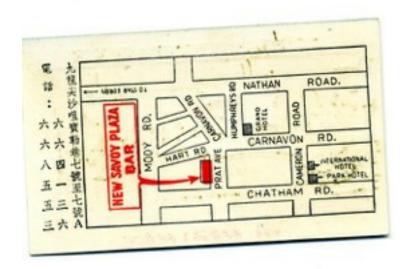
JADE STAR SAPPHIRE

SIAMESE SILVER IVERY

WOOD FIGURES

WATCH & REPAIR

Kam Chung Building Block C. Fenwick Street Hong Kong

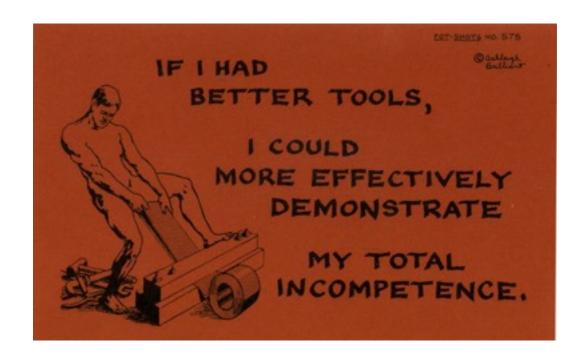


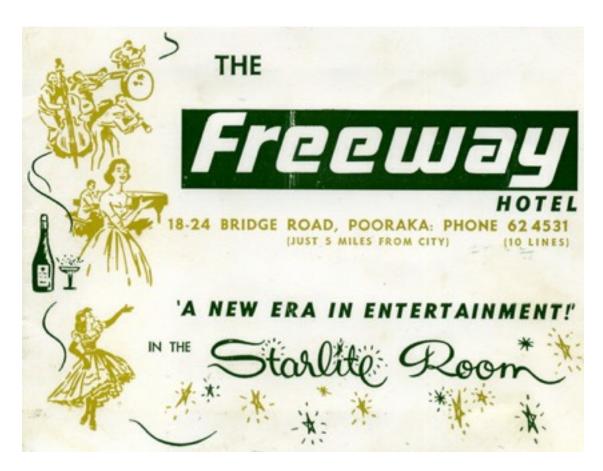


Examples of cards handed-out by touts; to encourage sailors to visit any particular bar.









This card from a hotel in Adelaide



1



HMS Hermes following her re-fit early 1968



Edna testing the starboard catapult

One of the wheeled-weights used to test the performance of the Steam catapults In the fore-ground can be seen the roller devices which centre the aircraft prior to launch.



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Hermes SAR Helo Early 1968



Sea-Vixen: The H on the tail indicates it is from HMS Hermes



Sea Vixens in close formation



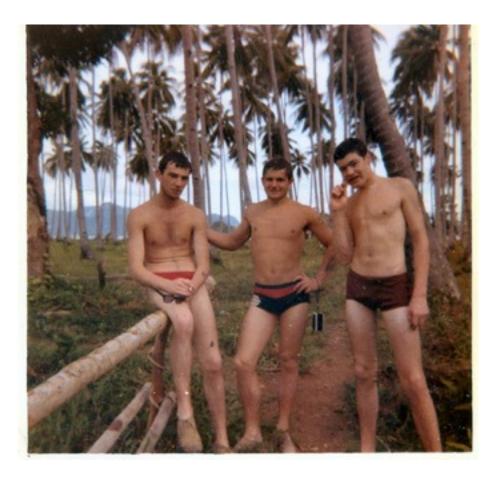
Sea Vixens flying over HMS Hermes



Wessex Mk 3 of 814 Squadron embarking on HMS Hermes



HMS Hermes at speed for launching AEW 3 Gannet



Pulau Langkawi [Ban-Yan] Jim Henderson, Mick Rodgers, Kit Colbeck



Anchored off Langkawi

Dave [Taff] Simpson Dave was another lad who was in the same class/mess at HMS Ganges 1965-1966 as

me and St Aubyn

Photos taken 4 March 1969 Not included in the Journal; the colour film had to be sent back to the UK to be developed and printed



Mick Lander, Russant, Gusty Blowers, Jock Hamilton, ?, Kev Stockdale, ?, Kit Colbeck, ?
The Team which entered the ship's Potted Sports challenge.



HMS Hermes Potted Sports Trophy Winners
Kit Colbeck, Jim Henderson, Dave Simkins, ?, [Maltese?]
Gusty Blowers, ?, Jock Hamilton, Kev Stockdale,
Mick Lander, Russant?, Mick Rodgers

Pictures from the Photographic Sect which did not get placed into the Journal



24 May 1968 one of the passes over the Hermes. Though the wheels and deck-hook are down for landing there was never a prospect of the aircraft landing on.



Sea-Vixen fly past.
Note: hands-over and fingers-in ears



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Buccaneer carrying Light-Series Bomb Carriers [2 under each wing] which were used to enable pilots to practice bombing tactics with 25lb and 28lb practice bombs without the expense of launching 1000lb bombs.

I left HMS Hermes' ship's crew: 23 June 1969

18 January 2016

The End