

## DOWN UNDER

### When the Kissing Had to Stop

They dubbed it the *Kissing Farewell*. Rumour says that it was the married men who got the ship ready for sea while the *beardless boys* said a tender last good-bye to their Aussie girl-friends. Was it 1,000 who jammed the wharf as the ship pulled out? Or was it 2,000? The band played *Waltzing Matilda*, then *Auld Lang Syne*; there were some who might have wiped away a furtive tear, the chopper flew round making our last obeisances. We may never go there again but it was voted by all who did "The Run of a Lifetime".



WAVE GOOD-BYE TO HIM, MABEL!



HE LEFT ME HOLDING THE BABY

### How to Win Friends

Postscript from the press.

"With a valedictory scream a Scimitar Jet Fighter from H.M.S. *Ark Royal* reluctantly said farewell to Western Australia.

"She came, as they say, to show the flag. It's still a very good flag to see in Australian waters and nobody could have worked harder or more successfully at making friends than did the Royal Navy.

"For more than a week the orderly, all-male life on board was ruthlessly disrupted to suit the convenience of thousands of blow-ins. Day after day working members of the ship's company stood politely aside at companions and alleys while the invaders swarmed past, gaping curiously at everything.

"Caps glittering with gilt oak leaves bobbed incessantly up and down ladders. Commanders cheerfully carried other people's kids around, and the sailors never wearied of carting children on the aircraft lifts or lifting them up to peer into the radar screens.

"It was a happy, friendly visit and the *Ark* will have an enthusiastic welcome if ever she shows up again on the Western horizon."

# DOWN UNDER

## *Reminiscences of Western Australia*

By D. G. SALTER-TOWNSEND

I dream of Western waters round Australia's sunny isle,  
Memories crowd softly back to warm a sad heart's smile,  
I see again so crystal clear in all my sweetest dreams  
The Serpentine Dam of W.A. with beauty's unspoilt scenes.  
In memory I walk again to King's Park's throne on high,  
To gaze below at the Narrows bridge with houses crouched nearby  
Seeing Perth at night, in yellow light, hypnotic to the eye.  
Now I'm restless in the night-time as I watch the silver moon,  
I see neat rows of orange trees and wild flowers in full bloom.  
Yea, a thousand landscapes glimmer in memory passing by  
As I raise my face to see the place the Darlings reach the sky.  
A vow I'll make that I'll never break - I will return once more,  
To drink your drink of happiness, to walk your friendly shore.



"NO, WATCHING RADAR DOES NOT HAVE ANY EFFECT ON ME"

### **A.I.O.**

"I am a mole. I live in a hole"

About half the seamen in the ship are R.P. ratings. They lead a double life, that is if you don't count their runs ashore. Part of the time they do seamen's duties and part of the time they spend running the *above the water* warning system of the ship. Warning the bridge of the approach of other ships, warning aircraft about other aircraft, warning this and warning that, they are the purveyors of information on which other people take action.

The only long-distance viewing device at present in quantity production is radar and this is the device which the R.P. uses almost exclusively to produce his information. He has to live in a dark cavern, watching and waiting. The only ones with bronzed torsos are the helicopter lookouts who, aided by binoculars, keep the controllers below informed of what is happening in the wide, wide world of the flight deck.

In a commission of this length almost any record that might have been made by a previous commission is bound to be broken. The one that we are really proud of is that no aircraft entrusted to our care has been lost.



WHERE'S THE GANNET WITH THE MAIL?

## GUNNERY



WHENCE ALL BUT HE HAD FLED

Some may wonder what the eight poles are which protrude either side of the port and starboard quarter of the ship. They are your line of defence should aircraft pierce the fighter defence screen - they are also the A.C.R.O.'s nightmare when he has to check "Are the 4.5's in the Flying Station position?". But there are times when this section of the community comes to life and, looking back at the records of the two previous commissions, we find that we have fired more rounds and participated in more exercises than did the last two put together.

Even so, to you who have served in cruisers or destroyers, we may seem to have done pitifully few firings, but remembering that we are in a ship whose primary purpose is to fly aeroplanes we have achieved quite a lot.

We must not forget the Close Range Weapons ranged on either side of the flight deck - slightly below deck level and prey to any object which may fly off the flight deck - in fact, a Vixen did once hit the Hilo sight and knocked it comfortably into the lap of P2 Bofors Mounting, while a Scimitar tried to take a bite out of S1 Bofors when its brakes failed after landing-on. (Rumour has it that the 4.5's got their own back for this - on a Vixen!) So these smaller pieces are not without their hazards. They too have done quite well for firings, manned normally by Gunnery Rate crews, but

also by the Supply and Secretariat Division and even a volunteer Engineer Officers crew.

Another part of the weapons organization is the Air Gunner's Party. That gallant band of sun-bronzed men who live in the Flight Deck Weapons Park. They fetch, carry, and supply the ammunition to enable the air weapons programme to run smoothly. They and the Squadron Armourers are assisted by the guns' crews in the supply of ammunition to, and the arming of, the aircraft. The assistance rendered by the seamen in this way is vital to the efficient operation of our air group.

A word about the Ordnance staff without whose sterling support the weapons organization could not operate. The team of O.A.s and seamen armourers who prepare all guns for firing, prior to any and every shoot, are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of both the armament and the bomb lifts.

So be it - but the department is not without its miscellaneous sidelines. Since the departure of the Royal Marines the training of the Young Seamen Colour Guards has become our lot - and smartly they perform too. When you are fallen in on the flight deck - Procedure Alfa - and little puffs of smoke appear from the depths at the fore end and envelope you in cordite fumes - this is the department firing a salute to some local dignitary or in celebration of some national event. The Internal Security Organization is our baby, and, although the platoons are drawn from all departments in the ship, the Gunnery Department is the co-ordinator. On one full exercise - during Fotex '62 in the Far East - the platoons had the unique experience of being landed in Singapore Naval Base by helicopters. The first time ever that a Naval landing party had been landed by *chopper*. They did well and earned a recommend from one Royal Marine Commando Umpire who said that they left the helicopters and formed up "like seasoned Royal Marine Commandos".

And so you who have doubts about the sticks that *spit fire* should dwell a pause and listen to the broadcast over Command Intercom when there is an Air Defence Exercise on and hear the golden voice of the Direction Officer saying "Over to Guns".

## ARK AID



THE HOUSE AT TANGIER

While in Gibraltar in the spring of 1963 a group from *Ark Royal* made a memorable contribution to international friendship and understanding. Three expeditions were made across the Straits of Gibraltar to Tangier in order to help the Cheshire Home for Incurable Children.

This home, a recent addition to the growing family of homes which Group Captain Cheshire, V.C., is founding in the United Kingdom and overseas, needed help in moving house. The new house is a big three-storey building with a fine view across to Cape Trafalgar. It had been empty for some time and needed redecorating. For three weekends teams of men from *Ark* arrived by M.F.V. (72-ft. Motor Fishing Vessel) and spent their time putting the place to rights. All the wooden floors were sealed with plastic polish, the shutters were painted, and a party of shipwrights made numerous divans and cupboards for the children's toys.

Perhaps one of the most satisfactory achievements was the conversion of a wheelchair by Ordnance Artificer Christopher Wadge. The chair is used by a six-year-old Arab boy, Mustapha, who has the use of his left arm only. Formerly

he propelled the chair with difficulty, using this one arm, but O/A Wadge converted it on board so that both wheels can be controlled independently, or simultaneously, from the left side. Young Mustapha was quick to master the new technique and the extra mobility makes all the difference to his enjoyment of life.

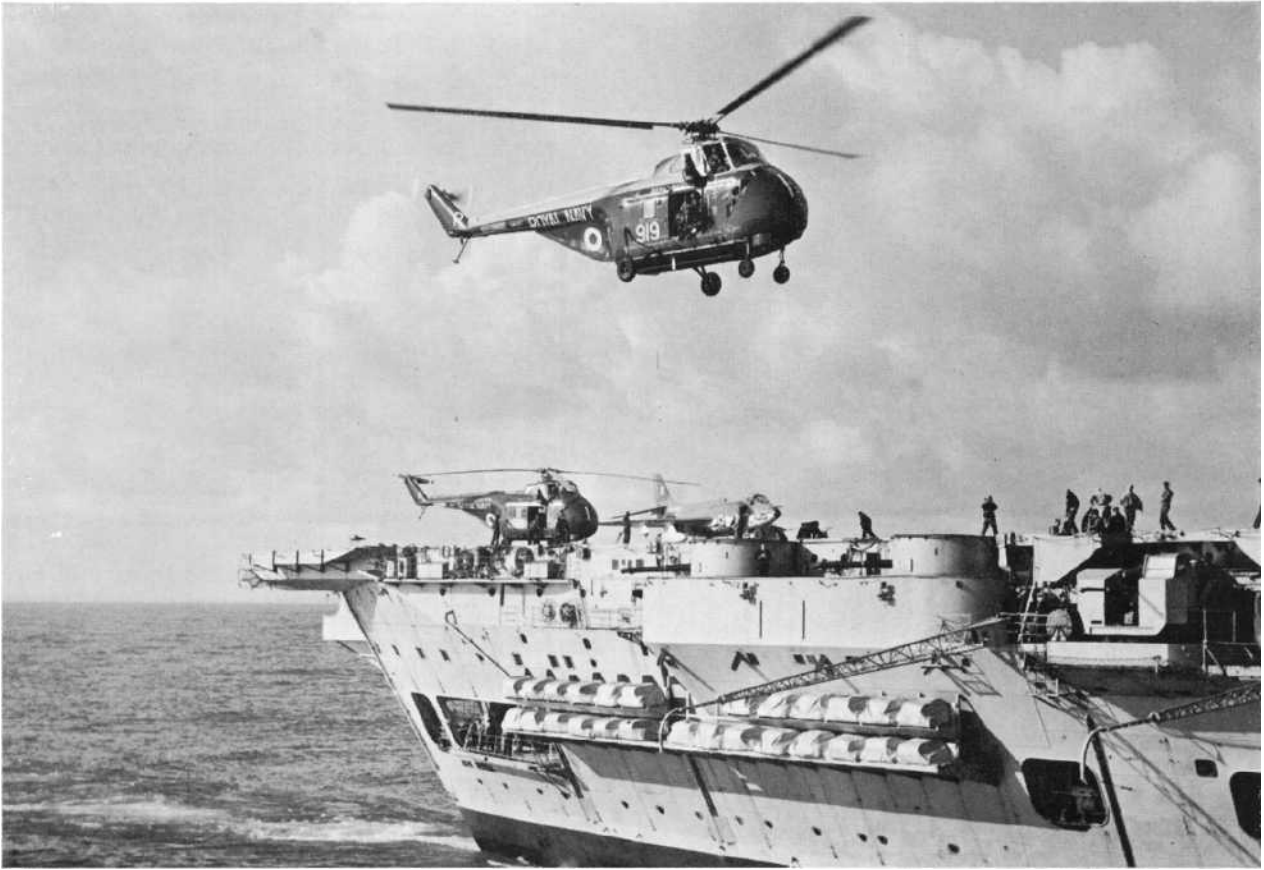
Some wonderful hospitality was shown to the *Ark* men by the supporters of the Home. The Governor of Tangier gave a reception, and there was a dance at which one member of the party donned a fine suit of armour; the sight of a naval knight caused considerable amusement, especially when it gave an exhibition of the Twist.

The young crippled children came to watch their new home being made ready for them and were delighted with what they saw. Their happy faces made the naval men realize how much their help had been needed and they saw that they would not be forgotten. While working on the project they found that they had learnt more of Morocco and had made more friends than they ever would have done in a week of shore leave.



THE "WORKING" PARTY!

## SHIP'S FLIGHT



The smallest, busiest, individual department within the Air Department of the ship, formed up at R.N.A.S. Culdrose on the 15th September 1961. This was to be the Search and Rescue Helicopter Flight of H.M.S. *Ark Royal*. Consisting *en toto* of two officers and fifteen ratings, we found a tiny room that no one appeared to be using, called it our office, and commenced work. The first thing to do was to find our aircraft and as nobody seemed to have any idea where they might be, the C.O. took the Senior Pilot in tow and proceeded to do some initial S.A.R. on two Whirlwind Mk 7 helicopters. After numerous inquiries and much searching one blue Whirlwind was discovered tucked away in one corner of a hangar. As no one wanted to claim it or have anything to do with it we decided it was one of ours. Not being able to find a second one we decided it must still be coming and sure enough two days later another blue Whirlwind chugged out of the sky and was handed over to us by the civilian ferry pilot.

Thus the ship's flight came to full complement and we began our work-up in earnest. After three weeks of hard flying, trying everything from night navigation exercises to all possible types of rescues, we thought that we were ready to go to sea. Duly the appointed time came and early on the morning of Monday, 9th October 1961, the flight got airborne and flew along the coast to *Ark*, waiting for us at *Charlie Buoy* in Plymouth Sound.

The first short period at sea was spent doing the deck trials and the Flight was kept busy ferrying people and stores to and fro between the ship, Devonport, and Portland, besides doing the routine job of *plane guard*. This was a foretaste of how we were to spend the rest of the commission. It was not long before we had our first emergency *Scramble*. Ironically it was for the other S.A.R. Whirlwind which had collided with the mast of H.M.S. *Crofton* during a transfer and had lost most of its tail rotor. However, he made it back to the deck safely, carrying a very worried doctor,

## SHIP'S FLIGHT

who had been halfway down on the winch when the collision occurred. This resulted in the old 919 being landed by lighter at Malta and a replacement aircraft being flown out from Hal Far. As the new 919 had originally been destined for an A/S squadron it was painted in the A/S colours of blue and yellow, which is why we have one blue helicopter and one blue and yellow one.

It was in the Med. on our way out to the Far East that we had our first live rescue. A Wessex of 815 ditched and we scrambled to pick up the survivors, another Wessex shared the rescue and we each picked up two survivors.

While with the Americans a close liaison was formed with the S.A.R. flight from the U.S.S. Hancock. We had many discussions with them and compared the different techniques of the two navies. They were very impressed with the demonstration given by our Free-divers. While there we shared a scramble with them when an A.D.5 from *Cubi Point* crashed into the sea. They were very impressed with the speed of our scramble as we were not called for, had farther to go, and very nearly beat them there.



FREE-DIVER BEING WINCHED BACK ON BOARD

Early 1963 was highlighted by the arrival of the Buccaneers and the Hawker P 1127. It was amusing to find that a Whirlwind could stay in formation with the Jumping Jet. However, it was decided that we were still the best aircraft for rescuing people from the water.



ONE CREW

On Thursday, 16th May 1963, the flight logged its 1,000th flying hour (remember, only two aircraft). It also meant the following statistics had been achieved:

- 2,011 sorties were flown,
- 2,220 deck landings were made while the ship was under way,
- 329 transfers to various ships,
- 36 photographic trips,
- 143 mail trips,
- 6 tons (approx.) of bread delivered to escorts,
- 1,075 passengers carried,
- 42,857 gallons of Avgas used,
- 16 times scrambled *for exercise*,
- 26 times scrambled in emergency.

# SATURDAY MORNING ON THE EQUATOR

By our Special Correspondent

"Her Majesty's flat-top *Ark Royal* was the setting this mad August morning for a scene of near-medieval pomp and splendour. At about 0930 (Golf/Hotel) His Majesty Neptunus Rex realized that his domains were about to be invaded and emerged from a dark chasm cleft in the after end of the flight deck, accompanied by his gracious consort, Queen Amphitrite, and all the splendour of his royal retinue.



THE PROCESSION

"This was not altogether unexpected as a weird submarine figure had, in the guise of *Herald*, already presented His Majesty's Patents and Peremptory Warnings the night before. His Majesty, and the Queen, attended by the Court Officials, Royal Barbers, Bears, Policemen, and Doctors and preceded by Ye Royal Minstrels, strode in solemn procession to the Dais where he was welcomed by the proud Captain of the *Ark*, Captain D. C. E. F. Gibson, R.N. In honour of this supreme occasion, *Ark Royal's* first venture into the Southern Hemisphere, the visiting Royal Personage generously bestowed upon the said C.D.C.E.F.G.,R.N. the Most Noble Order of the Flying Kipper, First Class. This award (S.O. Pay please note. There is no provision for gratuity or pension) was accompanied by a handsome presentation portion of Plymouth Rock.



"WATER WINGS"

"Watched by the Queen Consort and a multitude of superbly attired *Hearts of Oak*, the Court Proceedings were opened with the Ceremonial Trial and Due Punishment of the Executive Officer. Subsequently the many slimy slaves of the aforesaid C.D.C.E.F.G.,R.N.,M.N.O.F.K.,F.C. were similarly dealt with. (If they weren't slimy when they started, then they certainly were by the time they finished.)



DEMON BARBERS

## SATURDAY MORNING ON THE EQUATOR

"The proceedings, subtly synthesized by a most erudite and learned clerk and artfully administered by a resplendently robed Chief Justice were closely controlled by the devious dexterities of the police force. The *Hirsute Hacking Hoccupations* were barbarously performed and a team of dutiful doctors ensured that everyone suffered as much as they could physically withstand. Meantime the benevolent Bears disporting with aqueous ardour, vexed their victims with sadistic savagery, while the Herald became slightly hoarse through having neglected his Tombola practice.

"The Queen, tastefully and tremendously attired in a splendid creation of black hessian, sat quietly combing her flaxen tresses with the butt end of her *Wan-Chai burberry*, while the solemn scenes of initiation were pursued.

"Suddenly the fire hydrants were turned on and the crowd, which until then had been patiently melting in the sun, now melted altogether and the Lords of Misrule came into their own. Their Majesties left by the port catapult to return to their Equatorial Empire and all was utter confusion until *Up Spirits*."



HE NEEDED TWO APPLES

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### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The first *Ark Royal* started life as the *Arke Raleigh*, became *Arke Royalle*, then *Anne Royalle*. The second began as the *Ark Royal* and ended as *Pegasus*. The third, oddly enough, was only ever called *Ark Royal*. The fourth, the present holder of this famous name, started life as the *Irresistible*. Their Lordships apparently change their mind more frequently than any young parents anxiously awaiting the appearance of their first-born.

### AN UNUSUAL REUNION

While the R.F.A. Plumleaf was topping up the R.F.A. *Tidesurge* off the Western Australian coast the ship's purser, Mr. A. Douglas, was surprised to receive a visit from his son. The reason for his surprise was that his son, Naval Airman Douglas, was serving in *Ark Royal* in 890 Squadron and the visit was paid in one of *Ark's* helicopters.

### LOST

Whatever happened to the *For emergency* only bottle of *Scotch Comfort* donated by 800 Squadron to Flyco?



## MOMBASA



SPECIAL PRICE FOR YOU, SIR!

**T**he first thing that strikes the *Ark Royal* visitor to Mombasa is that he can not only see the shore but that it is only a few minutes' boat trip away. That factor combined with the plentiful supply of K-boats, prepared to run at any time at 2s. per head means that returning aboard after shore leave is not a half-hour purgatory as it is in so many of the places we visit.

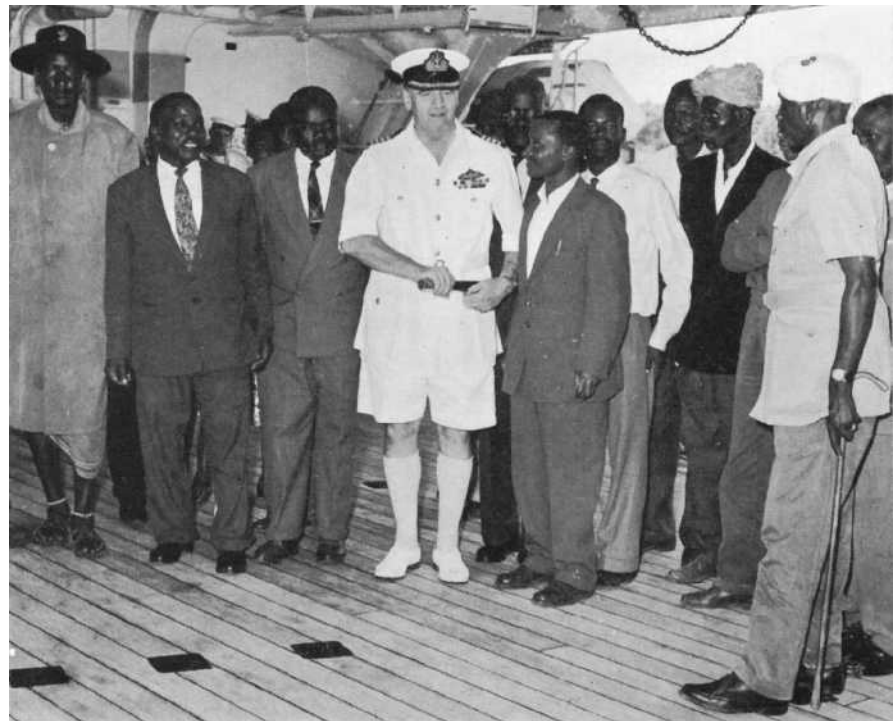
Once ashore, a short taxi ride, the elephants' tusks and the delights of the Kilindini road are laid out before the sea-weary matelot. A surprisingly wide thoroughfare, with distinctly European looking shops, but inside they have the traditional bazaar appearance that one would expect, knowing that most of the shops are owned by Indians.

Throughout the town the chief commodity offered for sale to tourists is the local wood carvings, bowls in a multitude of shapes and sizes, salad servers, devil masks and animals - every type of wild animal that inhabits Kenya is featured in wood. The prices are very reasonable and if you think the relatives will love them, then for a few pounds you can buy enough Christmas and birthday presents to last for years.

There are other things one can buy, a small amount of ivory is carved locally for instance, but particularly attractive are the native *finger* paintings, brilliantly coloured primitives, usually on black paper, they have tremendous vitality and simply glow with life. You can also get good bargains in Persian carpets, provided you are well advised by someone you can trust.



FLY-PAST OVER MOMBASA



VISIT OF UP-COUNTRY CHIEFS

## TSAAVO NATIONAL PARK

Considerable tracts of Kenya have been declared National Parks where the wild life is preserved in its natural state; even outside these parks it is an offence to kill game without a licence, so that the animals have little reason to fear the presence of man. Many from the ship took advantage of the one or two day trips into the park to see for themselves what it was like to be on safari in darkest Africa, albeit from the comparative luxury of an extremely teased-out local *Green Line* bus. Although the animals are not disturbed by the presence of humans as such, they have a natural antipathy towards noise so that the lumbering approach of a 60-seater diesel-driven bus tends, to a certain extent, to denude the immediate surroundings of wild life. Consequently most of it, apart from the nerveless, stolid elephant is only seen from a distance. Nevertheless given keen eyesight and guided by an alert bus driver it is incredible how many species can be seen. Starting with deer in bewildering variety and progressing through giraffes, zebra, warthogs, ostriches, baboons, rhinos, buffalo, even the occasional lion, to vultures, kites, pelicans, bush turkeys and a whole host of smaller bird life. It was incredible that one could with so little effort see so much. Naturally the camera enthusiasts clicked and whirred continually, depending on their speciality, consuming untold quantities of film and one can only hope that they achieved more than the occasional glimpse of a rear end disappearing into scrub.



TYPICAL "BUSH" COUNTRY

The route to and from the park passes close to many native villages, the houses are nearly all of the same construction, a stout framework of poles filled in with mud and stones and topped off with a conical roof of thatch. Many houses can be seen in a partially finished state so that the details are clearly visible. Unfortunately there is the occasional eyesore where civilization has provided the material and rusty corrugated iron sheets contrast starkly with the elegant simplicity of the wholly native work. A distinctive feature of the life of the communities is that although young boys are frequently to be seen tending the scrawny native cattle, the adult males for the most part sit around in the village *nattering* while the women are out in the fields doing the hard work. It appears to be a most inequitable arrangement.

The two-day trips involved a two-hundred-mile run into Tanganyika to visit the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro, spending the night at the Kibo Hotel, about 5,000 feet up. A few of the more hardy souls rose at four o'clock in the morning to go even farther up the mountain to see the sun rise on the snow-covered slopes. Whether one made this excursion or simply climbed to the flat roof of the hotel, none could deny the beauty of the mountain, it is a most impressive sight.

Regretfully one had to return to Mombasa where *Ark* rode at anchor, memories were stored with the wonders of tropical Africa, colourful, exciting and romantic.