

# HMS AXFORD



HMS Axford was a Ford class Seaward Defence Boat and one of seventeen. She was placed in reserve in 1963.

Purpose = Detect and destroy submarines (including midget submarines).

120 tons. 117¼ft overall, 20x5ft.

1x40mm Bofors gun. 1xSquid Triple barrelled depth charge mortar.

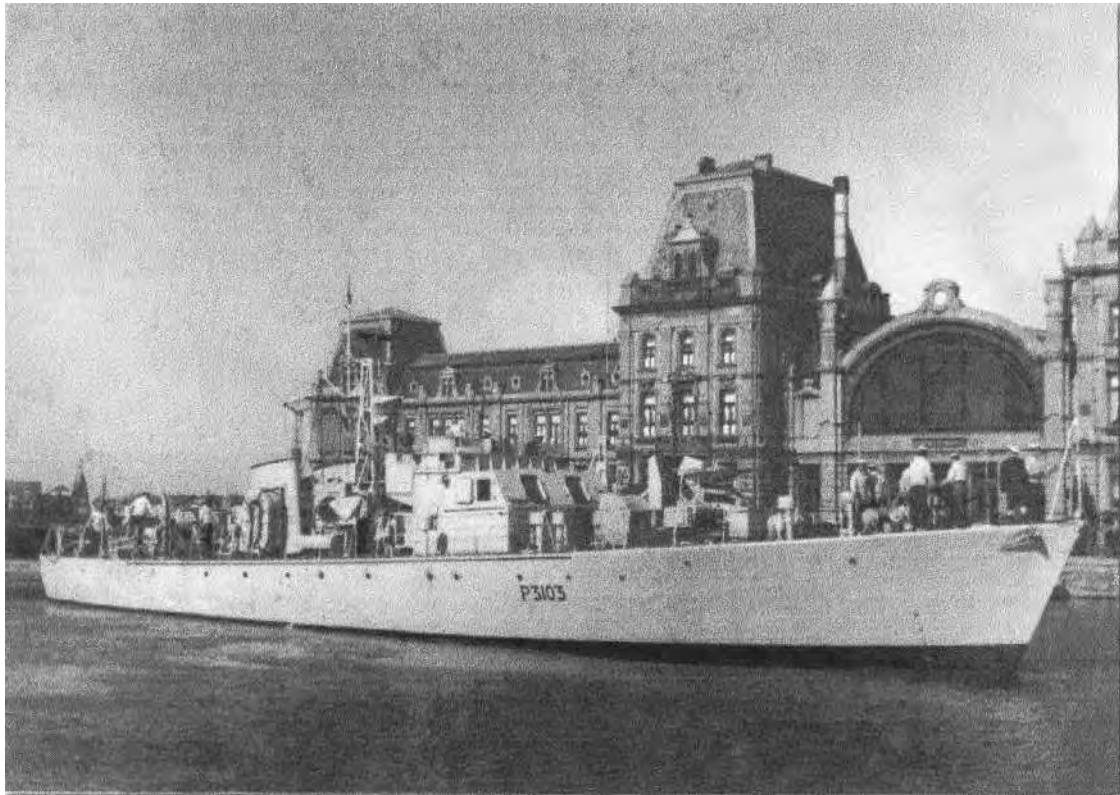
Machinery = Davey Paxman diesels. Foden engine on centre shaft.

Complement = 19.

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Commander Philip Noel had been the Commanding Officer of HMS Axford in the fifties. This is what he wrote:

*"She was attached to the Sussex RNR for a period in the 1950's as we had a strong TAS (Torpedo Anti-Submarine) division, and carried out three 14 day training cruises each year when she exercised her role as an A/S (Anti-Submarine) vessel in the approaches to major harbours. I remember her well as a handy, relatively comfortable but rather wet little vessel with some peculiarities in her propulsion system - three screws and two rudders but one had to choose between centre screw (hunt mode) or both outers (attack mode). Although I never sailed with her on a 14-day cruise, which we left to the TAS specialists, I was her No. 1 (1st Lieutenant - Jimmy) or CO (Commanding Officer - Captain) on many other occasions including visits to Ostende, Dunkirk, Calais, Dieppe, Fecamp, and the Channel Islands. Her main claim to fame was that she formed part of the escort for the Royal Yacht on the Queen's visit to the Channel Islands in the mid-1950's under the command of Lt/Cdr G. D. Guppy VRD RNR of HMS Sussex.*



### **Commander Philip Noel on port side of bridge**

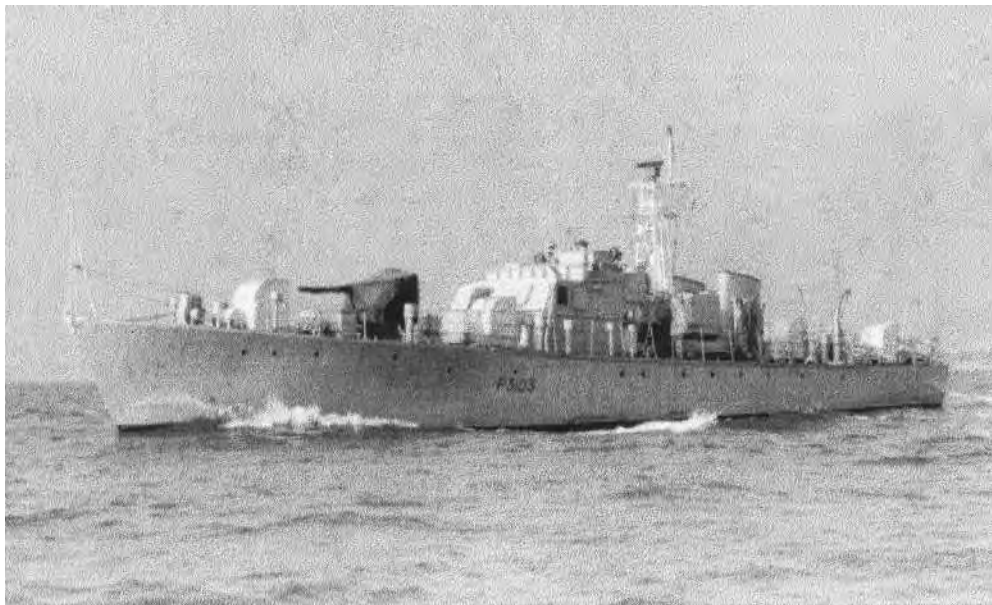
*The area under the bridge was the wheelhouse where dwelt the QM etc. Metal screens were swung over the windows on action stations leaving the poor old CO very much exposed on the bridge, from where the engines but not the helm, could be controlled.*

*The SDB's had no gyro compasses but were fitted with a contraption known as an ATMC (Admiralty Transmitting Magnetic Compass). Basically this was a magnetic compass capable of transmitting its readings to various repeaters (wheelhouse, bridge, ASDIC compartment etc). The technicalities of this piece of equipment might be worth some research but it managed to get us to our intended destination and driving Axford one weekend, and Curzon (Bickington, a Ton class with full gyro setup) the next, did not seem to present any problems. However things were less complicated in those days.*

*Afraid I do not know what happened to these lovely little vessels in the end. They were very economical to run but I suspect that the internal layout would have made them extremely expensive to convert for private use."*



*HMS AXFORD coming alongside in the 1950's.  
Shoreham Power Station in background*



*HMS AXFORD  
October 1958*



AXFORD

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