



“STEADY ON SAN MIGUEL”



**A HISTORY OF THE CHINA FLEET CLUB
IN HONG KONG**



**MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TRUSTEES,
CAPTAIN T.L. SUNTER, R.N.**



THE FOUNDATION STONE of the China Fleet Club was laid in January 1933 and with the exception of the war period the Club has played a vital role in the life of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines in Hong Kong for the subsequent 59 years. Owned by, and run for, the sailor and marine it has built a magnificent history of quality, maintained throughout by a first class management and staff team, guided by a volunteer committee of serving Hong Kong members who have given much of their own time, effort and imagination. It is sad indeed to see the closure of the Club which brings to an end an era of unmatched benefit to the Navy. The stark realities of commerce made the decision inevitable, but nonetheless the future is not all gloom. As a direct result of the financial success of the Club here in Hong Kong, The China Fleet Country Club has been built in Cornwall overlooking, of course, the Tamar.

Even with the advantages of a first class golf course, swimming pool etc it will be a hard job to match the reputation of this original, but the standard has been set and the traditions are established. Whilst wishing the UK Club every success I would like to join to this my heartfelt gratitude to the successive teams of management, staff and committee here who have set the very high standards and established a remarkable tradition over almost sixty years of unrivalled service to, and for, the Royal Navy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T.L. Sunter', written over a diagonal line that extends from the bottom left towards the top right.

CAPTAIN T.L. SUNTER ROYAL NAVY



CHINA FLEET CLUB 1985 - 1992



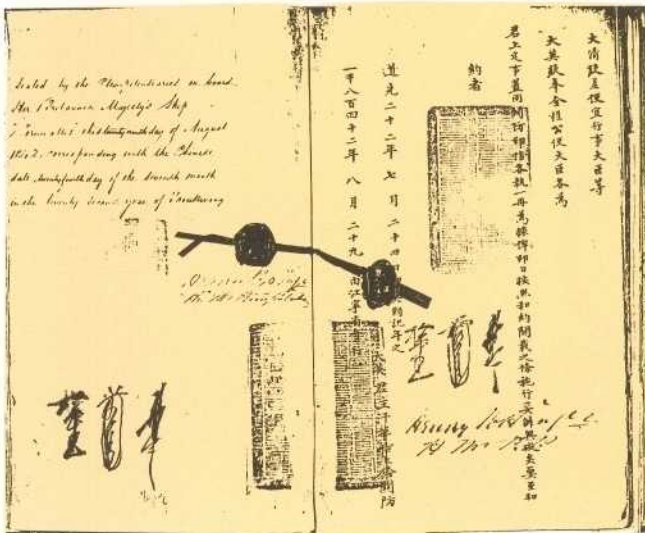
**THE CHINA FLEET CLUB
ROYAL NAVY,
HONG KONG**

**Produced on the occasion
of the Closure
of The China Fleet Club,
Royal Navy, Hong Kong.
30 Nov. 1992**

Editorial Team

**David Watts
Mark Hannibal
Andy Wagstaff
Caroline Field**

THE TREATY OF NANKING 1842



Treaty

HER MAJESTY THE Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the Emperor of China, being desirous of putting an end to the misunderstandings, and consequent Hostilities, which have arisen between the two Countries, have resolved to conclude a Treaty for that purpose, and have therefore named as their Plenipotentiaries, That is to say :- Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Sir Henry Pottinger, Bart, a Major General in the Service of the East Company & c.; And His Imperial majesty the Emperor of China, the High Commissioners Cheying, a Member of the Imperial House a Guardian of the Crown Prince and, general of the Garrison of Canton: and Elepoo, of the Imperial Kindred, Graciously permitted to wear the insignia of the first rank and the distinction of a Peacock's feather, lately Minister and Governor General and now Lieutenant General Commanding at Chapoo; Who after having communicated to each other their respective Full Powers, and found them to be in good and due form, have agreed upon, and concluded, the following Articles:-

Article 1

There shall henceforward be Peace and Friendship between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the Emperor of China, and between their respective Subjects, who shall enjoy full security and protection for their persons and property within the Dominions of the other.

Article 2

His Majesty the Emperor of China agrees, that British Subjects with their families and establishments shall be allowed to reside, for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation, or restraint, at

the Cities and Towns of Canton. Amoy, Foochowfoo, Ningpo and Shanghai; and her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain will appoint Superintendents, or Consular Officers, to reside at each other of the above named Cities, or Towns, to be the medium of communication between the Chinese Authorities and the said Merchants, and to see, that the just Duties and other dues of the Chinese Government as hereafter provided for are duly discharged by Her Britannic Majesty's Subjects.

Article 3

It being obviously necessary and desirable, that British Subjects should have some Port whereat they may careen and refit their Ships. When required, and keep Stores for that purpose. His Majesty The Emperor of China cedes to Her majesty the Queen of Great Britain the Island of Hong Kong to be possessed in perpetuity by Her Britannic Majesty. Her heirs, and Successors and to be governed by such Laws and Regulations as Her majesty the Queen of Great Britain shall see fit to direct.

Article 4

The Emperor of china agrees to pay the sum of Six Millions of Dollars as the value of the opium which was delivered up at Canton in the month of March 1839, as a Ransom for the lives of Her Britannic Majesty's Superintendent and Subjects who had been imprisoned and threatened with death by the Chinese High Officers.

Article 5

The Government of China having compelled the British merchants trading at Canton to deal exclusively with certain Chinese merchants called Hong Merchants (or Cohong) who had been licensed by the Chinese Government for that purpose, the Emperor of China agrees to abolish that practise in future at all Ports where British merchants may reside, and to permit them to carry on their mercantile transactions with whatever Persons they please, and His Imperial Majesty further agrees to pay to the British Government the sum of Three Millions of Dollars on account of Debts due to British Subjects by some of the said Hong Merchants, or Cohong, who have become insolvent, and who owe very large sums of money to Subjects of Her Britannic Majesty.

Article 6

The Government of Her Britannic Majesty having been obliged to send out an Expedition to demand and obtain redress for the violent and unjust Proceedings of the Chinese High Authorities towards Her Britannic Majesty's Officer and Subjects, the Emperor of China agrees to pay the sum of Twelve Millions of Dollars on account of the Expenses incurred and Her Britannic

Majesty's Plenipotentiary voluntarily agrees, on behalf of Her Majesty, to deduct from the said amount of Twelve Millions of Dollars, any sums which may have been received by Her Majesty's Combined Forces as Ransom for Cities and Towns in China subsequent to the 1st day of August 1841.

Article 7

It is agreed that the Total amount of Twenty one Millions of Dollars described in the three preceding Articles shall be paid as follows

- Six Millions immediately
- Six Millions in 1843. That is: Three Millions on or before the 30th of the month of June. and Three Millions on or before the 31st of December.
- Five Millions in 1844. That is: Two Millions and a half, on or before the 30th of June, and two Millions and a half on or before the 31st of December.
- Four Millions in 1845. That is: Two Millions on or before the 30th of June, and two Millions on or before the 31st of December.

And it is further stipulated, that Interest at the rate of 5 per cent per annum, shall be paid by the Government of China on any portion of the above sums that are not punctually discharged at the periods fixed.

Article 8

The Emperor of china agrees to release unconditionally all Subjects of Her Britannic majesty (whether Natives of Europe or India) who may be in confinement at this moment, in any part of the Chinese Empire.

Article 9

The Emperor of China agrees to publish and promulgate, under His Imperial Sign Manual and Seal, a full and entire amnesty, and act of indemnity, to all Subjects of China on account of their having resided under or having had dealings and intercourse with, or having entered the Service of Her Britannic Majesty, or Her Majesty's Officers; and His Imperial Majesty further engages to release all Chinese Subjects who may be at this moment in confinement for similar reasons.

Article 10

His Majesty the Emperor of China agrees to establish at all the Ports which are by the 2nd Article of this Treaty to be thrown open for the resort of British Merchants, a fair and regular Tariff of Export and Import Customs and other Dues, which Tariff shall be publicly notified and promulgated for general information, and the Emperor further engages, that when British Merchandise shall have once paid at any of the said Ports, the regulated Customs and Dues, agreeable to the Tariff to be hereafter fixed, such Merchandise may be conveyed by Chinese Merchants, to any Province or City in the interior of the Empire of China, on paying a further amount as Transit Duties which shall not exceed 5 per cent on the Tariff value of such Goods.

Article 11

It is agreed that, Her Britannic Majesty's Chief High officers in China shall correspond with the Chinese

High Officers, both at the capital and in the Provinces, under the terms "Communications". The Subordinate British Officers and Chinese High Officers in the provinces under the terms "Statement" on the part of the former, and on the part of the latter, "Declaration" and the Subordinates of both Countries, on a footing of perfect equality. Merchants and others not holding Official situations, and therefore not included in the above on both sides, to use the term "Representation" in all Papers addressed to, or intended for the notice of the respective Governments.

Article 12

On the assent of the Emperor of China to this Treaty being received and the discharge of the first instalment of money, Her Britannic Majesty's Forces will retire from Nanking and the Grand Canal, and will no longer molest, or stop, the Trade of China. The Military Post at Changhai will also be withdrawn, but the Islands of Koolangsoo and that of Chusan will continue to be held by Her majesty's Forces until the money payments, and the arrangements for opening the Ports to British Merchants be completed.

Article 13

The Ratification of this Treaty by Her Majesty The Queen of Great Britain and His Majesty the Emperor of China, shall be exchanged as soon as the great distance which separates England from China, will admit, but in the meantime counterpart copies of it signed and Sealed by the Plenipotentiaries on behalf of their respective Sovereigns, shall be mutually delivered, and all its provisions and arrangements shall take effect.

Done at Nanking and Signed and Sealed by the Plenipotentiaries on board Her Britannic Majesty's Ship "Cornwallis" this twenty-ninth day of August 1842, corresponding with the Chinese date, twenty-fourth day of the seventh month in the twenty-second year of Taoukwang.

(signed)
Henry Pottinger
Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary
(and)
Elepoo
Newchien
Cheying

Translation of Chinese characters:

The Emissaries representing both the Emperor of the Great Ching Empire and Her Majesty of the British Empire have agreed to the terms of the above mentioned treaty. To formalize the Treaty, please seal with the official defence chop; each party concerned should retain one copy of the treaty. The treaty is effective as of this day and should be carried out without regrets.

Signed By: Elepoo
Newchien
Cheying

Recorded on this 24th day of the 7th month, Taou Kuang Year 22; English Calendar; 29th of August, 1842 on Board Her Majesty's Royal Ship "Cornwallis" in the Jurisdiction of Chiang Ning Province.

THE ESTABLISHING OF THE NAVAL BASE

SOON AFTER THE British Crown took possession of Hong Kong in 1841 the Naval Authorities began to erect buildings along the foreshore of the original West Point site and on a new site in Central, which was to prove to be the permanent one. While store depots were established ashore, the Navy also made use of a succession of ships moored in the harbour, until 1897 when HMS Tamar arrived. This ship gave her name to the present dockyard and was scuttled in 1941 prior to the Japanese occupation.

The dockyard continued to expand entailing an increase in personnel and for the first time, in 1859, it appeared in the Navy list under the heading of "HM Victualling Yard" as well as under "Dockyard".

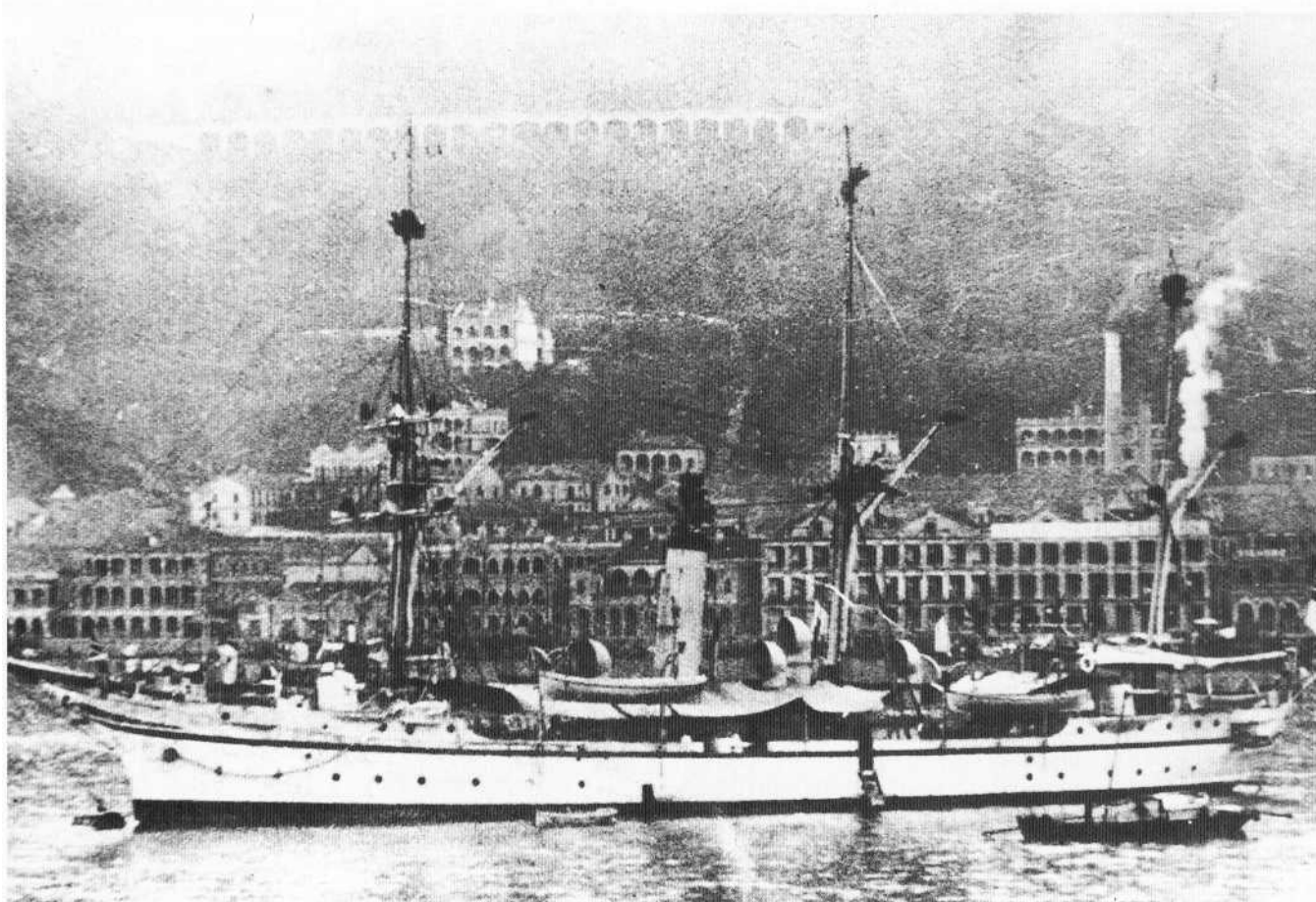
In January 1861 when Britain acquired the Kowloon peninsular the Navy gained a site for a coal storage yard and Stonecutters Island as a quarantine area. The remainder of the century passed with no apparent change in the yards. In

December 1901 additional land was purchased to the north of the Kowloon yard, again for coal storage, and the site in Central was slowly expanded to cater for the rapidly growing Naval presence.

Many wanted the Navy to move all its facilities to the Kowloon yard, but the Admiralty resisted and both sites remained Naval property until October 1959 when the Kowloon yard was handed back to the civil authorities.

The Central sited dockyard was surrounded on all sides by Army barracks which jealously guarded their land and would not allow any further expansion along the shore line - the only possible way to expand was seaward reclamation. In 1902 the foundation stone for the extension was laid and by 1908 39 acres had been created.

The new sea walls were 4,580 feet long and included a floating basin and a graving dock. The basin, designed to have an area of 9 acres



THE ORIGINAL HMS TAMAR



and a depth at the lowest Spring tide of 30 feet, today is a well known landmark along Hong Kong's crowded foreshore. The graving dock could take three submarines side by side at one time. The dry dock was eventually filled in October 1959 and all that remains today is the memorial stone taken from its head. This stone, with its brass inscription can be seen in a small garden in today's base.

The dockyard was under Japanese control from the surrender on 25th December 1941 until Admiral Harcourt and a very strong fleet arrived to repossess it on 30th August 1945. In September **A d m i r a l** Harcourt was **appointed** Commander in Chief of Military Administration.

T h e Navy proved to be invaluable to the rehabilitation process, helping civilian organisations, providing medical aid and maintaining Law and Order. More important even for morale was the way the service brought a welcome return to normality to the social scene by organising children's parties, dances and even cricket matches. A key role in the Navy's own social life, and in that of the Hong Kong community in general, was played by the China Fleet Club which had been established in the mid-1930's and really began to come into its own with the post-war years.

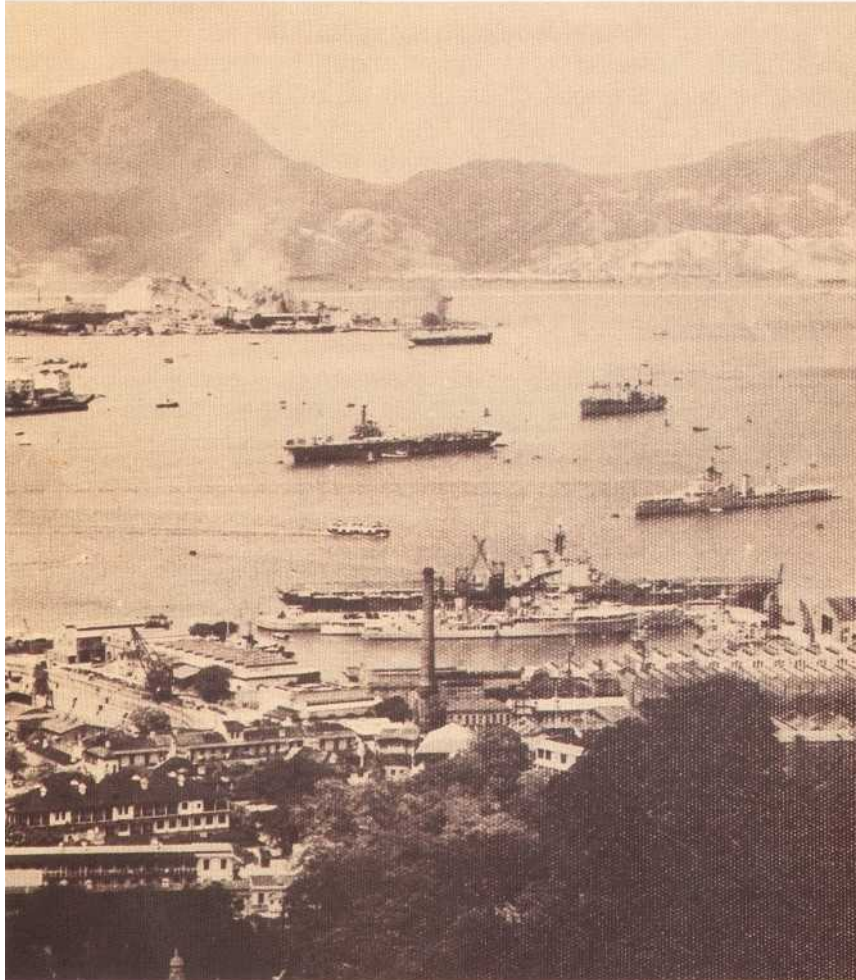
The natural culmination to all this was Victory Day on October 9th when the march past, outside the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank took 15 minutes.

On November 28th 1957 it was announced that the Naval dockyard would be closed down. The reason given being that there was no future

requirement for a full scale dockyard in Hong Kong due to the reorganisation of Naval forces. However to soften the blow the yard was to be run down over a two year period.

Though the dockyard had closed there was still a considerable Naval presence that had to be contained within the restricted area the Admiralty would retain. It was with some surprise that in August 1959 the public learned that the Navy had retained a toe-hold in Central and a sizeable portion of its old waterfront. The Colony learnt that the Hong Kong Government had agreed to pay £7 million for the Royal Navy Dockyard and

Kowloon Naval Yard, to pay \$210,000 for a wall around the new yard and half the cost of walling up the dry dock



T h e new HMS Tamar, and fifth in line, **gradually** emerged between 1959 and 1962 in the form of a **compact**, modern Naval Base between **Harcourt** Road and the water front. The road, designed to link Connaught Road and Gloucester Road was completed in 1961, and

built across former dockyard land. On either side old naval buildings were pulled down and used to fill in the dry dock. The buildings of the Tamar Section were left to the last but by 1962 the new office accommodation and quarters were ready in the western end of the base and transfer was made across the few hundred yards from the eastern end.

The tower block was completed in 1978 on the site of the old dockyard workshops, and was opened on the 4th March 1979 by the Prince of Wales. The seafront to the East of the basin was reclaimed and in 1986 the new workshops were built.

CHAPTER 1

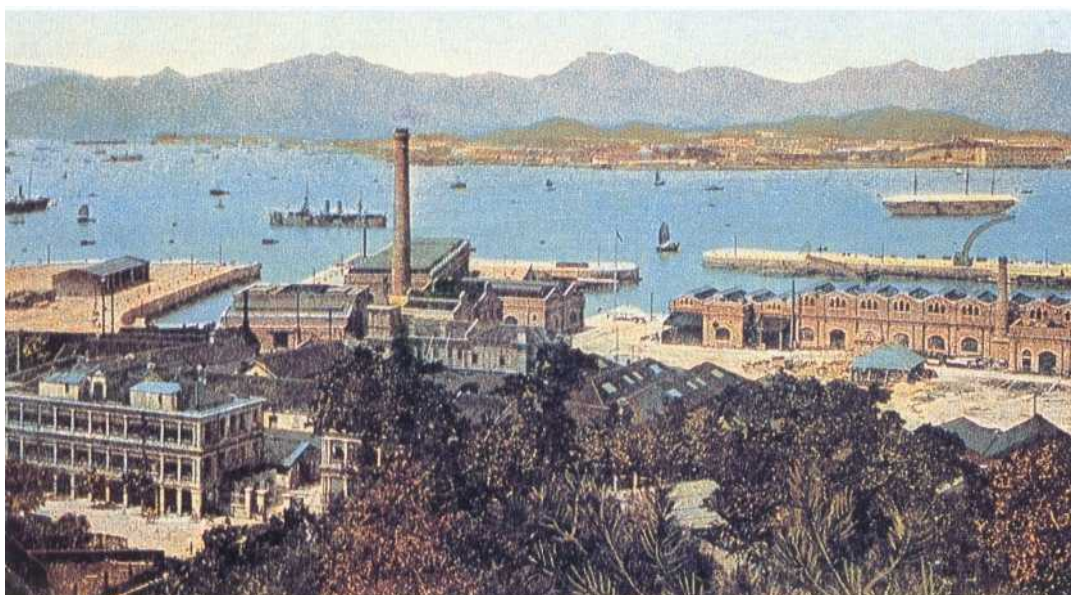
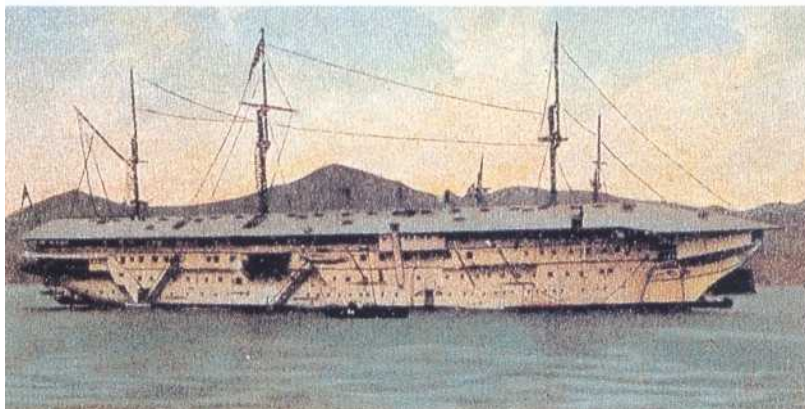
IN THE BEGINNING.....

THE ROYAL NAVY first came to Hong Kong at the request of the British opium merchants based at Canton whose ever increasing business, made illegal by successive Chinese Emperors, was jeopardised by the actions of one Special Imperial Commissioner for the suppression of the opium trade. In one week he had confiscated 20,291 chests of opium causing the merchants to seek shelter in the bays of several neighbouring islands, one of which was Hong Kong.

During January and March 1840 several Naval Actions took place which forced the Chinese to the conference table. A convention was finally agreed upon which allowed the British to take possession of Hong Kong island on January 26th 1841.

The home government, however, was not satisfied. Further expeditions between October and December 1841 resulted in many Chinese cities being taken, the Grand Canal being blocked, and the Fleet laying off outside Nanking. By the Treaty of Nanking of August 1842, the British Merchants gained the freedom they wanted, and the 'jewel' of Hong Kong was added to the British Crown.

Hong Kong has meant many different things to many different people over the 150 odd years of its status as a British Crown Colony. To some it has meant the view from the Peak, to others the magnificent harbour or the crowded shopping areas of Tsim Sha Tsui. To the ratings of the Royal Navy, however, for over 50 years it has meant the **CHINA FLEET CLUB**.



The Naval Dockyard at the turn of the century looking northward to Kowloon.

CHAPTER 2

THE EARLY YEARS ... THE ROYAL NAVAL CANTEEN

UNTIL THE CHINA Fleet Club was opened in 1934 the Royal Naval Canteen looked after the recreational needs of the Men of the Fleet in Hong Kong. That predecessor of today's Club, even before the First World War, was situated close by the old "Blue Buildings" on the corner of Arsenal Street and Hennessy Road.

But by 1920 the future of the Canteen was in question. The Commander-in-Chief, China Station, reported that the Hong Kong Government was considering a reclamation scheme to widen and straighten Queen's Road, which would mean the demolition of the Canteen.

Perhaps this was timely. The old Canteen was in such a bad state of repair generally, no modern sanitation even, that plans were afoot to spend something in the region of \$10,000 on redecoration and repair.

The premises had been purchased at an original cost of \$40,000 and their value in 1920 was between \$120,000 and \$150,000.

There were delays over the next three or four years while the possibility of a Union Jack Club for both the Army and Navy was considered. But in 1924 the decision was made to abandon this idea and to concentrate on a Club for naval personnel, leaving the Army to go its own way.

A possible site had been selected for a new Canteen on reclaimed land on Arsenal Street and Queen's Road. It was estimated then that \$1,400,000 would be needed for this project and that could be met as follows:

From the old Canteen	\$500,000
Compensation from the HK Government for the old site	\$400,000

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

Further delays were caused when the Admiralty objected to the site - it was too near the Naval Arsenal! During the next few years the Naval Dockyard expanded considerably and a good deal of land changed hands between the Admiralty and the Hong Kong Government, the net result being that the Naval Arsenal was transferred to Stonecutters Island.



The first China Fleet Club's predecessor - the Royal Naval Canteen.