



# H.M.S. DARING



FIFTH AND FINAL COMMISSION

1966-1968

## **Foreword**

by

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Commanding Officer  
H.M.S. Daring, 1966 - 1968



"When Daring commissioned on the 16th December 1966, none of us knew that this would be her final period on active service in the Royal Navy. Now in the autumn of 1968, this booklet marks not only the end of the present commission, but also the end of the ship herself.

In the course of the past two years we have seen a fair slice of the world - certainly more than our predecessors in other commissions. We have done our share of guardship duties and patrols East of Suez and nearer home; we have steamed many miles on good - will visits, much of our time has been spent on detached service, remote from normal exercise and training facilities. On the occasions when we have been in company with other units of the Fleet we have acquitted ourselves well and earned a reputation for being a smart ship.

The success we have achieved has required a great deal of hard work, enthusiasm and good - humour from every member of the Ship's Company. It has been a team effort of which I believe you may be justly proud and has provided a fitting climax to the last commission of the sixth DARING.

Good Luck to you all"

## THE BIRTH OF THE COMMISSION

Our predecessors of the fourth Daring commission paid her off into Reserve in December 1960 and she lay idle during the years 1961 to 1965 and most of 1966. In April of 1963 Devonport Dockyard took the ship in hand for a long refit (long being the operative word) to complete in October 1964. As we all know, delay followed delay and the job was not finally completed until December 1966, when this, the fifth and last commission got under way.

A number of us got to know the ship and the dockyard in a very intimate way indeed during the refit, it was a frustrating period, but at the end of it all one was able to look back and say to oneself that we had got the jolly old ship going again despite all the delays and the somewhat grizzly history of the whole period in Devonport. Indeed we had earned the ship's one and only Battle Honour - Devonport Dockyard 1960 - 1966.

To give a realistic idea of the state of the ship when I joined her in February 1966 is very nigh impossible, but my first impressions (which went on for months) were of chaos reigning supreme. e.g. a look into 'A' Engine Room from the laundry (there was no bulk-head between the two) showed no machinery at all, just a mass of junk lying all over the place.

There was no accommodation anywhere - no offices, no cabins, no desks, no fittings - just empty compartments, there were no messdecks - just empty compartments and battered and bent ship's side lockers.

The Operations room and wireless offices were gutted, the bridge consisted of the outside shell, the G.D.P. was not there at all, and so on ad infinitum. Very slowly, like Humpty Dumpty it all came together again and one day we actually raised steam in 'A' boiler. The same day an almighty bang was heard throughout the dockyard and a number of us up in Drake assumed the worst had happened, until the buzz got around that it was only Tiger having some unscheduled 6" target practice against the dockyard wall.

One Sunday in late October 1966 was a particularly busy day for the seamen preparing the ship for sea on the Monday, ditching the tons of gash which had accumulated on the upper deck. The ship was even painted light grey for the great event. With innumerable fingers and hearts being crossed Daring got away from the jetty on time on the 24th October under her own power, with a trials crew and a mass of dockyard mateys crawling over the ship. Four days of these preliminary sea trials went off better than anyone had dared expect and even the guns were fired, though not at the end of the complete system.

After post sea trials most of the seamen went to pre-commissioning courses and command team training while the dockyard worked feverishly to complete by December the 16th - having let five previous dates slip by, this one HAD to be met.

Suddenly it was commissioning day and by this time we had been living onboard for a fortnight. The service was held on the forecastle under canvas and we drank beer and champagne and scoffed our beautifully decorated cake which had been cut by Mrs Suchlick and Junior Seaman Hodgson. Then it was Xmas leave before going to sea again in January and February for the Sea Acceptance Trials.

Sea Trials of radio and radar, guns, mortars and sonar went on interminably and we certainly had our trials and tribulations. It was a frustrating time for all, but at least it allowed time to get used to the ship before the work-up at Portland in March. The winter had been remarkably kind to us thus far although a number of trials, aircraft sorties had to be cancelled due to low cloud base.

One weekend in March the CSO(T) to CinC HF, Admiral Wise came onboard for his inspection which was a real field day. He visited every compartment. and spent four hours doing so before announcing his verdict that we were 'operational', i.e. ready to be thrown into the Portland ring. In fact the ship was looking very well, but the gunnery was still by no means satisfactory.

Portland seems to get on with Darings and Admiral Sharp seemed reasonably pleased with the way things went. We had our ups and downs like everyone else and the programme still had a tendency to go to the right. Torrey Canyon required our presence for three days as a range safety ship (who said it was impossible to get to sea in 3 hours from 8 hours notice for steam?) and the boilers came in for a week of unscheduled water wash when we should have been having the sea inspection.

Every man onboard will have his personal highlights of these Portland weeks - for some it meant almost continuous work to keep the equipment serviceable, for others the NBCDX's were a nightmare. Emergency breakaways during all night RAS, the frantic rush to be ready for a ceremonial entry; the confusion of a Casex A17, the apparent success of the Distex. It all added up to a remarkably busy and stimulating period of the commission and in retrospect I daresay one or two of us even enjoyed the odd brief moment.

The Whitsun visit to Cherbourg was a grand opportunity to forget Portland just for once, although it turned out to be a bit of a distex itself. We distinguished ourselves in several directions, and one character who shall remain nameless scored a distinct win by being the first R.N. matelot to spend a night in the brand new police station opened only four days previously. Cest la vie! and with a vengeance.

Another spell of leave for all, in June and July, while the ship was prepared for East Suez. Again there were numerous last minute preparations as D-day crept closer and closer. Departure day was a major event in the life of the ship and the story really starts on this, the 17th July. 1967.

D. Pentreath.

First Lieutenant.



## DARING'S CREST

While Rome was being besieged during the Etruscan wars a youth named Gaius Mucius, set out to kill the enemy king Lars Porsena, but not knowing him by sight, slew his secretary in error, Mucius was arrested and brought before the king, who threatened him with torture.

"I am not afraid of torture," exclaimed the young Roman as he plunged his right hand into a brazier, and held it there until it was consumed by the fire.

So impressed was Lars Porsena that he orde-

red Mucius to be released. The youth then advised the king to make peace with the Romans, saying: "I am but the first of three hundred Young Romans, all equally daring, who have sworn to kill you or die in the attempt." On hearing this Lars Porsena made peace.

Gaius Mucius was received with great honour on his return and the nickname "Scaevola", arising from his injury, was given to him.

This deed of daring is illustrated in the crest of Daring.



*COMMISSIONING DAY FROM DARING TO DARING S.C.*



*COMMISSIONING DAY*



## JULY TO JULY

There was never a fairer morn in Plymouth than on the 17th July when DARING, funnels belching and engines turning, left that green and pleasant land for the foreign leg of her General Service Commission. The sun shone, to send us away with the memory that England, after all, was still worth returning to. A few wives and girl friends were there to wave good-bye - with the First Lieutenant and a couple of reluctant AB's.

Gibraltar was but three days sailing, via an afternoon at Portland, and an even-tempered Biscay. The strained relations between England and Spain over Gibraltar did little to dampen our spirits ashore. Many crossed over the border to La Linea where, as in Gibraltar itself, it was fiesta time, and a blaze of lights and blare of sound provided the background to the lovely senioritas in Spanish traditional dress.

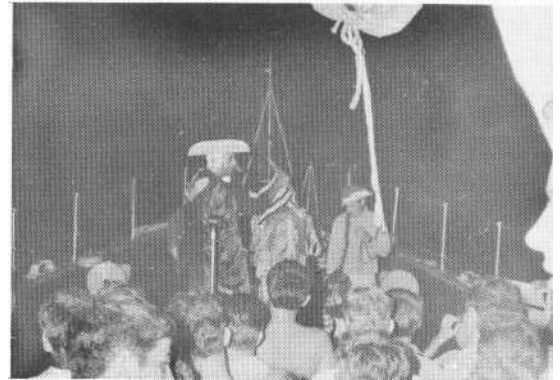
On the Rock itself there was plenty to occupy our time for the whole of the two day visit. A ride on the cable car to the top of the rock was worthwhile for the splendid panorama over the Straits to the North African coast; while many swam in the clear waters to cheat the terrific heat of the day. Gibraltar was having its hottest day for many a year, and the Soccer team, kicking off in the evening, had twenty minutes each way of torture with the thermometers at a bursting 105 F. A 3-3 draw with HMS ROOKE was very creditable in the circumstances.

Saddest of all to see the Rock disappear in the heat haze must have been Chief Dixon who got married on the Friday and had only time for an eighteen hour honeymoon with his English bride.

Shortly after leaving Gibraltar the weather deteriorated and we were only to see the sun through a watery atmosphere until our arrival in Simonstown, where a downpour cleared the air.

The first of many small ads. began to appear in the 'DARING NEWS' expressing both a feeling of frustration and a desire to return to the bows and arrows navy :-

FOR SALE : Two storey mobile residence on semi-permanent site within stones throw of the sea. Mains electricity. Twin electrically operated disposal units. Hydraulic lifts between floors. Observation bubble with upholstered seat - can be rotated to follow the sun or at night ideal for star gazers. Plenty of storage space. Workshop with fitted bench and engineers vice. Telephone and private intercom unit. Air conditioned throughout. Owner must sell due to impending nervous breakdown. Any offer considered (over 3 tots) Apply sole agents :- PINNEGAR, GREEN & EVANS Co.Ltd. X Turret.



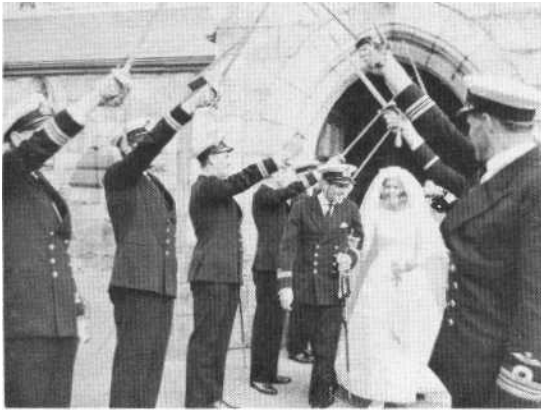
*'Crossing the Line'*

DARING officially and actually "crossed the line" at 1000 hrs GMT on 30th July 1967 for what we believe to be the first time in her life. A riotous crossing the line ceremony, well organised by S.Lt. John Stoakes and ably supported by Chiefs Beasley, Taylor and Judson, provided welcome relief from the long journey. Nearly every member of the ship became coated in an evil smelling mixture of paste, feathers and purple dye - and the fresh water consumption figures were classified for that day.

A short stop at Freetown, necessitated by having to land a sick ERA Warren (who fortunately rejoined us within an hour), enabled us to see the hot and steamy jungle clad hills of Sierra Leone and provided a few extra days of LOA.

Rough seas, heavy swell, torrential rain and howling gales were poor travelling companions around the Cape and in False Bay, and were not the kind of reception we needed after days of high speed steaming to meet our ETA.

Our first mammoth run ashore was Simonstown where the Ship's motto "If you can't stand the pace . . . . . DOUBLE IT" was not at all an exaggeration of the hospitality received. True enough, it was winter time, and many got cold feet, literally, waiting for the early morning trains at Cape Town's modern station but many returned for more of the same punishment. Even the First Lieutenant decided it was time to rejoin, just to see what we were up to. Our navigator, George Pearson, kept up the average of a marriage a visit (which we were unable to maintain), and reached the dizzy heights of the Cape Town Press, a position both his bride, known to the QMs as "just Fay", and George himself, sustained for days.



No visit to Cape Town would be complete without mention of Table Mountain which provides an impressive backcloth to a bustling, boom-

ing city. For those to whom mountains have a special appeal, and, indeed to those who want to climb every one they see, Table Mountain is a great seducer. The interplay of light and shade, clouds appearing and dissolving in a matter of minutes, the wonderful colours and hues produced by the setting (and rising) sun give it an air of enchantment that is felt within, rather like a moving piece of music. It was a great pity that the cable way to the top was out of order, but even from half way up there was a superb view of Cape Town, Table Bay and the huge South Atlantic rollers venting their spite on the miles of golden sand.

And so to Beira, with Dr. Nobbs elegantly quartered in the DARING Hilton complete with a dignified modern-day Jeeves.

We had been firmly led to believe that the waters off Beira were a veritable paradise for our growing army of fishermen. Competitions were soon under way for the longest, heaviest and prettiest fish to be caught. Middle watchmen were heavily outnumbered by glassy eyed, stooping shouldered, finger twitching zombies using every available method, fair or foul, to outwit their unsuspecting prey. Unsuspecting? We did not catch a fish for days - and dynamite was no help either.

The days passed more quickly than we all expected; kite flying, whaler racing, small arms shooting, indoor games and tug-of-war all helping to relieve the monotony of the patrol. We quickly began to realise though that Sundays were Mondays, but that Mondays were infrequently Sundays.

A Sod's Opera on the forecastle on passage to Mombasa gave us a good excuse to let our hair down, though none more successfully than AB Jenkins, whose performance as a sex-kitten was nearly more than an audience of lusty sailors could stand. Maurice Shreeve gave us a superlative display of his talents as comedian and raconteur with Brien Beasley as his foil.



Mombasa gave us our first opportunity to take station leave and many stayed at Silversands, a few miles up the coast, or took a free train journey to Nairobi, where the higher altitude meant a more refreshing climate than that, of the hot and sticky sea board.



*A Sods Opera*

Silversands is aptly named, for its palm fringed beach, fine white sand and clear sea would grace any expensive travel brochure. We arrived there to relax after our long spells at sea and it cost us very little, whereas European and American holidaymakers were paying the earth.

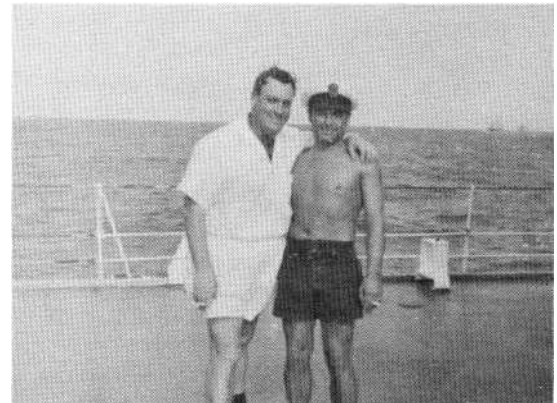
The visitor to Nairobi also fulfilled his mission, arriving back to the ship with an empty wallet, thick head and a fund of travellers' tales. Even the train journey by itself was well worthwhile with good food and comfortable beds and a view of the Kenyan landscape if one was early enough to rise. It is a strange and unnatural feeling to gaze out of a train window and meet the stare of a giraffe before you have collected your wits. Nairobi, too, will be remembered for its modern hotels and office buildings, its parks and gardens and rows of jacaranda trees, but perhaps more so, the night life. Mention Nairobi to some, and they automatically think of "The Sombrero".

A safari to the Tsavo National Park proved to be the highlight for the dozen who managed to rise at 0400 and survive the bone shattering journey to Buchama Gate, seventy miles from Mombasa. Their efforts did not go unrewarded, for, as well as seeing all the usual big game, a chase through the scrub after lion added an unexpected excitement. When we stopped some ten yards away from two mature lionesses O.E.M. O'Neil caused some considerable consternation between our two drivers by nonchalantly getting out of one car and walking over to the other to ask for a can spanner! A good day, hot and dusty, but something you cannot do from Plymouth unless you go on an RN cruise.

What can one say of the 'Star', 'Casablanca' and the 'New Florida' that has not been said before, except that a few of our juniors literally got 'carried away'!

And so, back to Beira, for rest and recuperation.

Diego Suarez, a run down old French colonial town in northern Malagasy, gave us a five day break from the blockade. A juniors exped., a few sports fixtures, including a shooting competition with the crack marksmen of the Foreign Legion, and the gyrations of the Malagasy maidens at the 'Taverne' are all worthy of a mention.



And Beira.

Another short stay in Mombasa and we were off to the Far East, leaving Dr. Nobbs behind with malaria, and LMA Wilson kneeling on his prayer mat chanting magic formulae before his sacred rabbits whilst counting the elephant hairs on his wrist as if it were a rosary. The DARING Hilton was never to be the same again.

In the middle of the Indian Ocean in the early hours of a Wednesday morning DARING suffered from an apoplectic fit. A complete power breakdown left us wallowing and trumpeting like a sick elephant. Candles flickered throughout the ship and the voice of the PO Writer (complete with inflated life jacket), pierced the confusion "Which side shall I jump?"

Gan, a small coral atoll in the Maldiv Islands quenched our thirsty fuel tanks, and its beaches and clear warm seas gave us welcome relief from our hot decks. Swimming over the coral amongst the brilliantly coloured fish was an enthralling experience. One could have been in a silent world where fear is unknown. The fish were so tame and inquisitive that no strenuous efforts were necessary to explore this colourful fantasy.

At long last we reached the home of the Far East Fleet in Singapore, where we were to spend the next seven weeks. For four weeks of this time the ship was out of water in a floating dock, and the ship's company off the water in HMS TERROR whose facilities were enjoyed to the full. Many took the opportunity of flying out their wives and families; others sought their own entertainment in the swimming pools and bars of TERROR and in the streets of Singapore, J.B. and Sembawang.

The Rugby and Soccer teams went to the RN Training Centre at Frasers Hill to toughen themselves for future conflicts, and many a pound of DARING fat must have been left behind in the cool, but soggy, Cameron Highlands. On their return to hot and clammy Singapore, eager to thrash all opponents in sight, just one proved too wily and too invincible. Rain, rain, rain.

It took a Scotsman to brave the vagaries of the weather; having been so bitten by the golfing bug at Frasers Hill, Jock Hutton could be seen daily bashing hell out of the rain, driver or putter making no difference, often up to his knees in mud, and completing the nine hole course at TERROR in a record 187 strokes.



*Hong Kong*

Christmas Day back on board was, of course, a mixture of excitement, booze and pathos. There is no substitute for a Christmas spent at home with one's family, and no amount of liquer can stave off that feeling of emptiness. Enough of the sob stuff. Junior Seaman Bruce, acting local three-ring Captain for the day, did rounds of the ship before lunch, followed by a huge retinue, but even Goodhew's whites were not ample enough to appear in the procession. The already oiled carollers outside the Wardroom were suitably rewarded with more Tiger, and we virtually said goodbye to our jovial hydrographer, John Stoakes.

Much more could be said of Singapore, but we will keep our secrets to ourselves, shall we!

No one had not looked forward to arriving in Hong Kong, which we did just in time to celebrate New Years Eve, however untraditionally in Wanchai and the Dragon Bar at the Hilton. What London appears to the British Isles, so Hong

Kong appears to the whole of the Far East. A bustling and thriving city of millions, set in magnificent surroundings (unlike London), with an exotic and erotic air all of its own - a typical James Bond setting. The view from the peak, by day and night, made one drunk with wonder and astonishment, though the chilling winds whistling through the look out shelter at the top of the tram way soon dispatched all but the hardy tourist, and the twenty minute exposure photographer.

The Americans were there too, on R and R from Vietnam, or as civilian tourists, and could pay the prices the British sailor just could not afford. Many of us who were revisiting Hong Kong felt that its position at the top of the 'rabbits' league had gone - spoiled by the uncautious spending of the money laden Americans. As a comparison between the two navies, most of the USN Officers took a room at the Hilton, whilst all we could manage was bed (sometimes) and breakfast on board.

Two don'ts from the American Navy handbook: "Don't pick a fight with a British sailor - they are too tough!" and "Don't go drinking with a British sailor - they last the course better!", gave us some amusement and Goodhew, in no uncertain terms, certainly proved the latter, by drinking enough not to have to pay for any, and then having breakfast at the Hilton, all at the expense of his naive American host.

Subic Bay, with exercises, and Olongapo brought no rest from the hectic runs ashore in Hong Kong. Olongapo, a one street town of bars and night clubs, 5000 registered 'girls' and 2500 reserves, served the needs of the American Fleet and, on this occasion, DARING too. Sixty-four American ships, including the massive ENTERPRISE were reported to be arriving in Subic Bay to enjoy a weekend, but the PUEBLO affair caused a 180° diversion, leaving the town comparatively free. It was at the 'Riviera' that Harrington confirmed his notoriety, performing

without inhibitions with the lithe Philippino strippers. Anyone for a sausage on a stick? And who will forget the 'East Inn', where girls were girls and showed it?

The Americans appeared to be favourably impressed by us, so much so that one even turned up at 'Both Watches'. However, after employing him with a paintbrush for some time he was duly returned.

Wanchai, Kowloon, Victoria, the 'Dateline', B.M.H., 'Suzie Wong', the China Fleet Club (who threw a grand party for us) - what blood stirring memories they elicit, and here, indeed, we must count our best runs ashore. The sports teams too, made the most of their opportunities, but their stories are best left to other pages.

DARING shone like a new pin after all the efforts of the side party (and the Buffer?) when we finally said goodbye to Hong Kong to sail down under to a land of Kangaroos and Koalas, A week of uneventful sailing through the Philippines and the Indonesian Islands, punctuated by yet another shoot at Subic Bay, was enough to see us arrive at a hot and sticky Darwin, where a hard and rugged life awaits the would be settler. Being 'buzzed' by a scantily clad blonde water-skier on entry provoked a wry smile from a tense bridge and a view of what lay in store for us around the corner.

Around the corner! It took another week, sailing inside the Great Barrier Reef, before being embraced by the open arms of Brisbane. The cry of "Go home, you pommy bastards. Leave our women alone" did not particularly worry us as it came from the one half of the population in which we had little interest. The first invitation to arrive? Forty-Five throbbing girls wished to take an equal number of sailors out for the day to the Gold Coast, Queensland's fun and sun spot, playground of the Pacific! The Routine Office, normally a place of hiding where one can hear the steady drone of Wiley's typewriter producing the daily issue of "How yesterday's

sea-boat drill went wrong", was so bombarded with volunteers that the port passage could have been painted without any interruption whatsoever. (For readers unfamiliar with DARING and all stokers, the Routine Office is on the starboard side.) Five days passed all too quickly to enjoy and explore Brisbane to the full, but our first real contact with the Australians certainly opened our eyes. They are more English than we are in their attitudes and ways, and their socials appeared typical of those found in a small rural English village thirty years ago. They are proud of their country but very sensitive to criticism.

We were virtually a non-starter in Sydney, for our three day visit immediately preceded Captain D2's Harbour and Sea inspection. The inspection passed off extremely well, and unbiased, but jealous, opinion was that we were certainly the smartest looking ship in Sydney. Mention Sydney, and automatically a picture of the famous bridge springs to mind, but its architectural dominance is now being challenged by towering buildings and the harbour-side Opera House with its futuristic sail-like roof. Bondi beach, King's Cross (Sydney's Soho) and the famous Sydney rock oysters all provoke a desire to return to sample these and other attractions. (All right for some!)

For the benefit of the Australian Cadets, the Fleet exercised off Jervis Bay, a completely new experience for DARING to be in company with no less than seven other ships. An impressive day for the cadets we had on board - it seemed as though we fired more bullets than the rest of the Fleet combined. The climax came when all ships turned into line abreast and simultaneously fired their A/S weapons.

Part of a herd not being our custom, we begged our leave from F02FE and pointed our bows for Williamstown, a dingy, smelly and scruffy suburb of Melbourne, where a small Naval dockyard complete with typical English strike, allowed the Ship time for an assisted maintenance period

with the help of the FMU from HMS TRIUMPH.

"Let's get together and have fun"! is the literal translation of the aborigine word `Moomba' and the theme of Melbourne's annual festival. Although we arrived towards the end of the festivities, the theme of `Moomba' extended throughout our visit.

A few days local leave gave us the opportunity of seeing something of the surrounding countryside. Parched earth, withered grass, the black hulks of burnt eucalyptus trees were conspicuous signs of a State undergoing its most serious drought this century, and, of course, there were fire-warning notices around every corner. A day tour to the Sir Colin Mackenzie Sanctuary, forty miles north east of Melbourne through the very scenic Blue Dandenong Mountains, showed us the peculiar animals and birds of Australia in natural surroundings, including that freak of evolution, the duck-billed platypus.



*Queen of the Pacific*

DARING was not without its touch of glamour in Williamstown, for no less than four beauty queens visited the ship at one time or another, and the newly crowned Queen of the Pacific, Baby Santiago, with equally delicious chaperon, witnesses the fair distribution of the daily tot of rum issued on the forecastle.

On leaving Williamstown we sailed due south towards King Island, whose inhabitants had not seen a Royal Naval ship for over thirty years. However the weather deteriorated and the sea was so rough that only a brief exchange of greetings was possible between our First Lieutenant and the island councillors.

Joined by H.M.S. CAVALIER and H.M.S. TROUBRIDGE we then headed west on the three thousand mile journey to Mauritius. Crossing the Great Australian Bight we experienced our biggest swell of over eighty feet from trough to crest. Often the horizon was a mere fifty yards away, looking upwards, but we completed the passage without mishap, although we had several days of apprehension when cyclone 'Monica' crossed our intended track, and entered Mauritius on a bright and sunny morning.

Mauritius, unfortunately, was still in a state of tension following the inter-racial riots after being granted independence in March, and the dusk to dawn curfew restricted our shore-going. Those of us who ventured ashore during the three day visit found the island a beautifully green and picturesque place, past volcanic activity much in evidence, and extensive sugar-cane covered plains. After the drought of Melbourne, Mauritius was a refreshing sight and there was a delightful profusion of tropical flowers and fruits everywhere in evidence. Delicious bananas were less than a penny each - or a one for one swop with cigarettes! The main attractions of Mauritius because of the curfew, were the very lovely beaches which are gradually putting the island on the map as a tourist attraction.

Completing a full circle of tens of thousands of miles we cruised past the Oceanic Hotel yet again for another Mombasa holiday. As before, we gave leave, and groups stayed at Silversands or went to Nairobi to lay in a store of run-ashore fat before the six weeks of patrol starvation. Enjoyed to the full, empty pockets and bleary eyes, brown paper bags containing a varied

collection of rabbits, a shell smelly after cabin flat, lounging on the fine silver sands of the Kenya coast, and a tropical orchid on the bridge sum up the pleasant fourteen day stay. We said our farewells to Lieutenant Langdon, CERA Impey and POGI Wilson and welcomed their replacements.

Beira, Beira, Beira, Beira and Beira. From the outset it seemed as though five weeks on patrol would be interminable, but the hours grew into days, which matured into weeks, and very soon we were to be headed south for the last time.

Sharks, for the first time, were caught by DARING fishermen, the honour of the first catch going to a very patient George Clifton, but 'Slinger' Woods did not take long to emulate the feat.

Prizes, bought with twenty pounds donated to the Ship by the Kenyan Government (a sort of cafe rebate?), were the rewards of success in the several indoor competitions and also for the fishing league won by Dixie using kipper-impregnated bacon. Saturday evening racing at Vinnecombe Park became popular as a way of letting off steam, and another Sod's Opera, showing off the talents of Maurice Shreeve and Peter Lawrence had to be drawn to a close after it had been going on for four hours.

Two boarding party exercises carried out with H.M.S. AURORA also helped to relieve the monotony of 'Hope' and 'Joy'. AURORA'S party received a not too-hospitable reception on a mock-up French tanker complete with striped sun-shade and wine on the forecastle, whilst we, prepared for the worst, met little opposition from a subdued and disinterested symbolical German tanker

During a session of upper-deck sports, our Captain severed an Achilles tendon while completing the obstacle course and had to return to England for hospital treatment. It was a sad

day therefore when Commander Suchlick was transferred by light jackstay to HMS AURORA, from there to Beira by helicopter, and thence to U.K.

A very strange feeling was produced when HMS DIANA appeared over the horizon to relieve AURORA. It was like watching your own reflection in a mirror gradually becoming closer and closer, and our superior feeling over other ships became one of equality with DIANA. It was DIANA that finally detached us from Beira when HMS GRENVILLE arrived one rough, stormy day, though not before our first vertrep.

We shed no tears on leaving Beira - on the contrary. Our faces were wreathed in smiles and glowing with contentment as we set course and speed for another, but shorter, hectic time in Simonstown, though the first two days of the passage were anything but smooth.

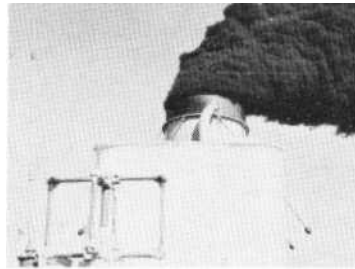
The weather, on entering False Bay, behaved little better than our last visit, but unfortunately, unlike the previous occasion, it showed no signs of letting up during the whole of our stay. Nevertheless, the continual rain was ineffective in dampening our spirits after six weeks at sea. We picked up the threads from where we left off before, but, also having to fulfil other commitments, the five days were far more hectic. More lame excuses were hobbled out at Captain's Table explaining the malfunctioning of alarm clocks.

An unusual request received by the Ship was for volunteers to feed penguins oiled in a disaster similar to our own Torrey Canyon affair. The cynical smiled, but soon had their faces wiped clean when over one hundred rushed to append their names to the list. A very nice letter of thanks was forwarded to the Ship by the authorities for all the hard and messy work required to keep the several hundred penguins alive.

A successful shoot against a sleeve target preceded our final departure from South Africa on

a voyage with HMS ZEST that would finally take us back to Devonport. The long and slow journey with ZEST and RFA WAVE BARON was so protracted (almost having to increase speed to take a bathy dip) that the two weeks seemed the longest fourteen day's of the commission. To enable us to arrive in good time for Gibraltar Guard Ship duties, ZEST ordered us to proceed, and, at last, at eighteen knots, we all felt we were getting somewhere.

But yet a strange and wonderful event was to happen. Oh! What bounteous joy! The Chief of the Watch in A Engine Room rang the bridge to inform the Officer of the Watch that he could not, repeat NOT, blow soot! Reeling from this dreadful admission and loss of face a dastardly plan was put into operation. A Boiler was flashed up, B closed down, and to the engineers' delight dense clouds of oily black smoke chortled merrily from the forward funnel for the next half hour. A beaming Chief ERA was observed to go paddling on the soot strewn iron deck.



*An Engineer's Delight*

Gibraltar was our last opportunity for rabbits; suitcases and pussers grips were soon to be seen in the streets, rapidly becoming heavier with goods 'Made in Hong Kong' as though there were only two shopping days to Christmas.

And this is where my story ends, for shortly we shall enter Devonport to the sort of homecoming that I have never experienced, and that mere words will be too humble to describe.

Instructor Lieutenant J. G. MOSS