



H.M.S.

DEVONSHIRE

1962 - 1964

U.S.A.

NOVEMBER 1963  
WASHINGTON D.C.  
NOVEMBER 1963  
NORFOLK  
NOVEMBER 1963  
PHILADELPHIA



BERMUDA  
NOVEMBER 1963



WEST INDIES

SAN JUAN  
PUERTO RICO  
NOVEMBER 1963

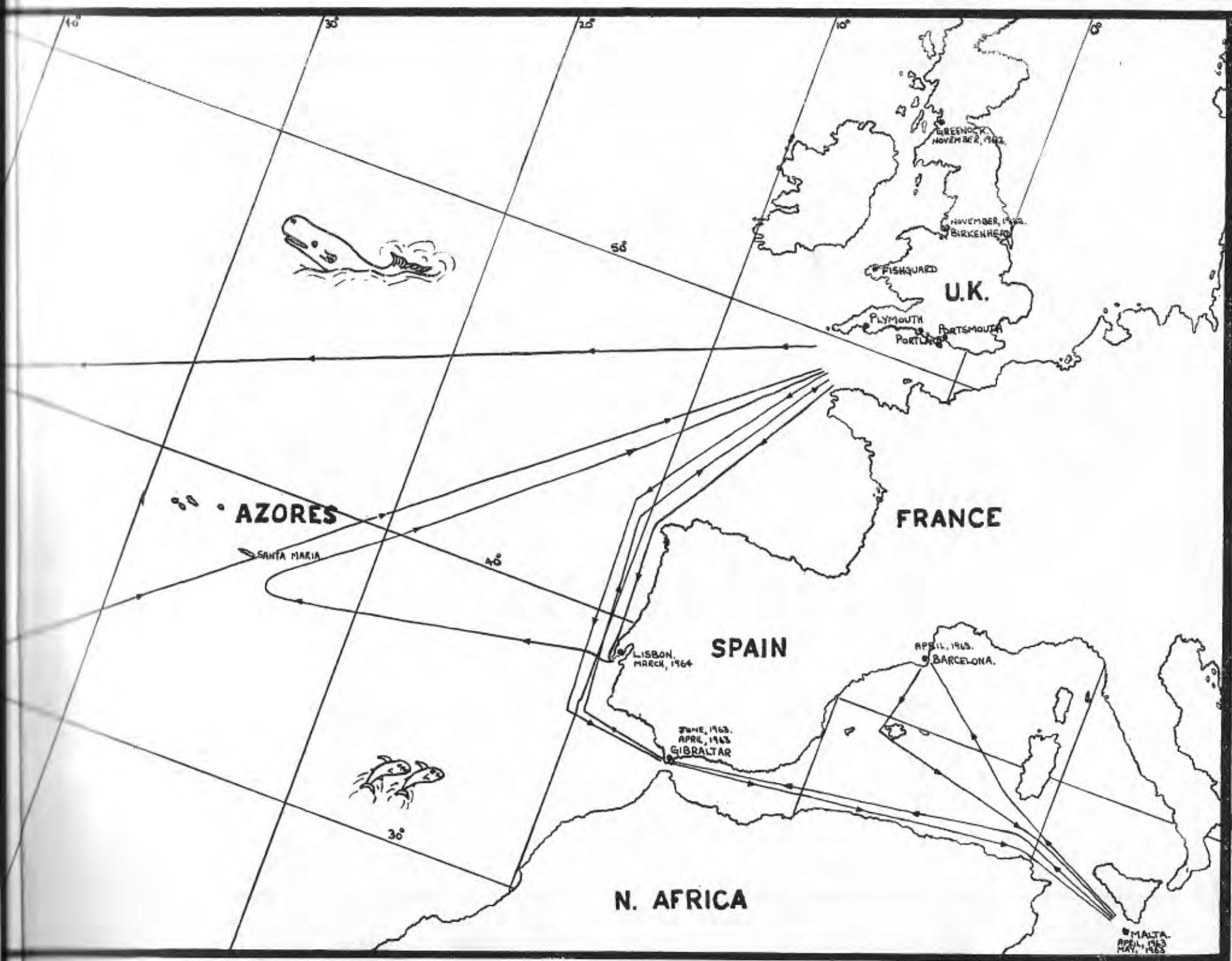
NOVEMBER 1963  
CURACAO

DOMINICA  
NOVEMBER 1963

ST. VINCENT

BARBADOS  
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1963





The Story  
of  
Her Majesty's Ship  
Devonshire

Britain's first Guided Missile Destroyer

*The First Commission from 1962-1964*



*Ceremonial Entry into Portsmouth Harbour, December, 1962*

# FOREWORD

by

Captain P. N. HOWES,

*D S C., Royal Navy*

On commissioning day, 15th November 1962, I promised you a lively time in many oceans of the world. I also forecast that the first of a new class of ship would encounter many trials and tribulations during her first commission. This book will remind you of some of the things we have done together, some of the records we have broken, and, individually, will recall to you the high spots of our many voyages.

What have we achieved? First and foremost, we have proved that we have a ship that can keep the sea in any weather. We have evaluated the great number of new machines and devices which make for the fighting efficiency of the modern warship; we have discovered the proper way to use our equipments and we have faithfully recorded our findings for the benefit of those other County Class ships who follow in our footsteps.

At the same time we have shown ourselves to be capable of joining the fleet at a moment's notice, ready for war and fit to fight.

But this is not all. We have made many friends in the course of our travels. Tens of thousands of ordinary people have come to see our ship and have taken ashore with them the impression that we are a friendly people, proud of our achievements, and second to no other nation in the world. In short, we have made an outstanding success of our cold war role.



I am very proud to have been in *H.M.S DEVONSHIRE* for her first commission, and I trust you are equally proud. I wish you and your families success and happiness wherever you may serve, and I thank you for your loyalty, sense of duty, and unfailing cheerfulness throughout our time together.

*CAPTAIN.*



# Devonshires of the Past 1692-1962

The name *DEVONSHIRE* has been in use for ships of the Royal Navy since 1692 when it was introduced as an honour to William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire and a prominent supporter of William III. Since that time a *DEVONSHIRE* has figured in the Navy list for no less than 174 of the 270 years, the present vessel being the eighth of the name.

The first, an 80 gun 2nd. Rate was built at Bursledon and was made ready for sea in time to take part in the Battle of La Hogue on the 22nd-23rd May, 1692. For many years the 2nd. Rate formed the backbone of the British line of battle, the *DEVONSHIRE* being no exception. She met her end in a gallant action against the French under Duguay Trouin in October 1707.

The second *DEVONSHIRE*, again an 80 gun 2nd. Rate, appeared just three years later and played a prominent part in the War of the Spanish Succession and subsequent operations in the Baltic. Hulked



in 1740 she was replaced in 1745 by a 66 gun 3rd Rate which was to see much action in the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years War, the battle honours *FINISTERRE*, *LOUISBURG*, *QUEBEC*, *MARTINIQUE* and *HAVANA* being indicative of her service during these troublesome times. Her end came in 1772 when she was broken up at Portsmouth.

The fourth vessel to bear the name *DEVONSHIRE* was a small fire-ship whose short lived career came to an end at Calais in 1804. Thereafter the name remained vacant for eight years until 1812 when a new 74 gun 2nd. Rate appeared. Apart from the Anglo-American conflict of that year, however, peaceful conditions prevailed at sea and the fifth *DEVONSHIRE* passed an uneventful career, apart from a spell as a prison hulk for Russian captives during the Crimean War, until she was broken up in 1869.

Thus we come to the first steam driven *DEVONSHIRE*, a 10,850 ton armoured cruiser completed at Chatham in 1904. A powerful looking vessel with her four prominent funnels she played a useful role in maintaining Britain's position at sea until 1921 when she was sold for breaking up. Her successor, completed at Devonport some eight years later was a three funnelled cruiser of the well known County Class which served with distinction during the Second World War. Prominent amongst the activities of the seventh *DEVONSHIRE* was the destruction, in November 1941, of the German raider *ATLANTIS*. Completely refitted in 1947 she re-appeared as Cadet Training Cruiser and was scrapped at Newport in 1954.

The seventh Devonshire  
in August, 1940  
Photo: Imperial War Museum



# THE BEGINNING

When did the commission actually begin? The Admiralty records—and indeed the cover of this book—will show that it began at the Commissioning ceremony, on 15th November, 1962, but to many of us the story begins much earlier.

To Commander "SAM" Birkett, the ship's first Engineer Officer, and to Chief E.R.A. Munroe, the big day was the 10th June, 1960. On that sunny day in Birkenhead, they watched HRH Princess Alexandra launch the ship with the traditional blessing, "MAY GOD BLESS ALL WHO SAIL IN HER."

Inevitably, it would be a long while before anyone could sail in her. As the launching coat of fresh paint got dirtier in Cammell Laird's basin, the long and complicated fitting out process got underway, and the first members of the ship's first commission watched and learnt.

By the end of 1960, the advance party consisted of the Commander, Commander E, Commander L, Lt. Maber, Chief ERA Munroe, Chief Shipwright Parr, Chief ME Youd and POME (now CME) Gage. Our numbers continued to grow steadily throughout 1961, until by late summer 1962, over thirty officers and 140 ratings were "standing by."

We were based in offices close to the main gate of the works, with a noisy electrical shop beneath us, a rather leaky roof above and a fine view of the daily "out muster." Other centres of activity were the ship, of course, and the vast scale mock up of the machinery spaces in a shed near by—a complex mass of wooden engines, boilers and pipework.

Accommodation was very much a matter of luck. By and large the Landladies of Oxton and Cloughton, of Rockferry and New Brighton, did us proud, but a few proved difficult to handle. Such was the case with the three Leading hands who once found themselves sharing lodgings with a monkey; one officer was required to change into bedroom slippers at the front door mat, place his walking shoes on the newspaper provided in the hall and never on any account to open a window, so that his landlady could keep the digs clean. Another landlady "gave notice" after her lodger had expressed his view on the supper quite clearly by throwing the chips at her.



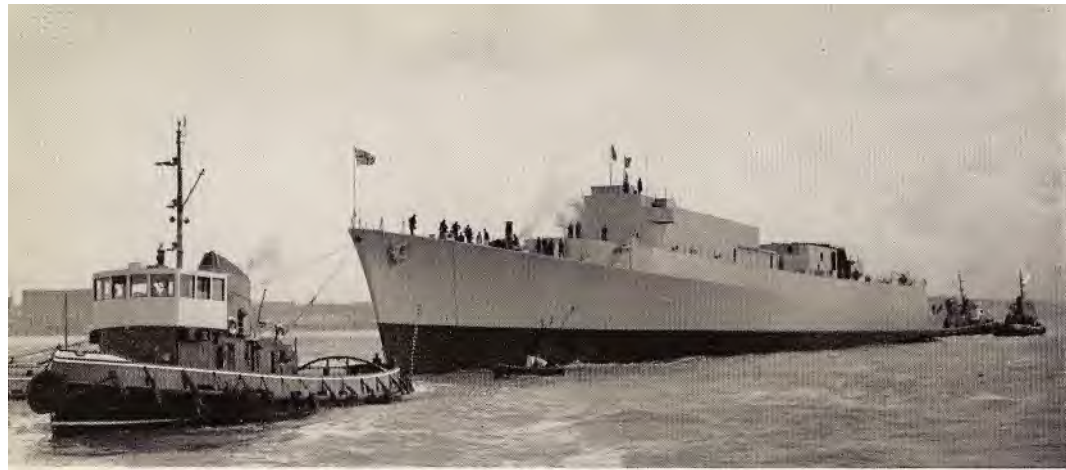
*Photo: Elsam, Mann & Cooper, Ltd., Liverpool*

"Liquid Lunches" were popular. To get to the bar of the "Royal Castle," for example, one literally only had to dodge across the main road. But to many, who could not abide such a hideous Victorian visage, it was worth a step along to the "Manor" to get a pair of cheese sandwiches and a jug or two of ale. The really ambitious went far afield in search of a solid meal at a reasonable price, and the Gunnery Officer is said to have sampled every cafe in Birkenhead.

Of other activities there was plenty. It was natural that in such an area, golf soon became an "organised sport," led by C.O.A. Tulip, a team of OA's and others could be seen departing with a bag of clubs on many an afternoon—how far they actually got round the course was never discovered. LEM (now P.O. Elect.) Bagley played cricket for Cammell Lairds and led the Embryo "Devonshire" team to at least one crashing defeat at the hands of the demon Boilermakers.

One other sport must be mentioned—that resulting from the annual tripper invasion of the Wall, in spite of the higher demand and prices of lodgings there, each summer saw a great increase in "approved lodgings" in New Brighton, and fewer long weekends spent away from the area. Details cannot be given in this magazine (for obvious reasons), but it must be recorded that Merseyside took a considerable toll of our batchelors. The prize undoubtedly goes to Leading Seaman Horner, who, arriving as a batchelor AB, contrived to be a married leading rate with three children before the ship commissioned.





*Photo: Elsam, Mann & Cooper, Ltd., Liverpool*

Onboard, the work went on steadily, as did the forecast seatrials and commissioning dates. For each compartment, first of all drawing meetings were held, to discuss and finalise drawings; then a "lineout inspection" carried out by appropriate experts, with all the fittings marked out in the empty shell (how much more space there seemed to be in a messdeck then!). Next came progress inspections when the larger fittings and electrics were installed; inevitably a few alterations would be made, often at the advance party's instigation, and eventually a final inspection carried out.

At last in March 1962, the ship was ready for contractors' sea trials. These started with two days off the Mersey, then continued for three fortnightly periods in the Clyde. Accommodation was short, so only a portion of the advance party could be onboard at one time; the remainder kept a dreary telephone watch back in our Birkenhead offices. The trials themselves were most impressive—you don't often see your ship at full power astern for 4 hours, or see her being forcibly rolled to over 27 degrees each side. It was unusual, too, to see the ship being run on Merchant Services lines—but we were impressed by the food, which was reported to have cost about four times the rate of "Pussers" Victualling Allowance.

With trials completed, back we went to the basin at Birkenhead for the last pre-commissioning leg. As final inspection dates came near, ship manager Fred Morgan got more and more hard pressed; fortunately for all of us, he remained good natured and co-operative to the end, and we were delighted to see his efforts rewarded with the MBE at the New Year's Honours List after our acceptance.

Our offices became ever more crowded as Commissioning approached.

*Farewell to ye  
Landladies of  
Birkenhead*

*What a  
beautiful baby*

One little cage found no less that twentyfive artificers trying to change, drink tea and study drawings together; while next door, over several different discussions on Ops Room manning problems, the voice of the Gunnery Officer could sometimes be heard arguing with his butcher about his Sunday joint.

It is not easy to describe the pace, pressures and problems of the last few weeks. To an outside observer, it must have seemed chaotic—storing versus painting, tuning versus cooling water, commissioning plans versus British Railways—and above all a chronic lack of space in which to do anything.

At the Eleventh Hour, commissioning had to be delayed two weeks owing to a painters' strike. Bitter blow though it was, "it is an ill wind that blows no good"; the main draft could be assembled in Portsmouth and properly briefed; lots of little things onboard could be better finished, and the advance party could get a much needed breather before the next hurdle.

Commissioning week dawned damp and cold. On Tuesday morning, 13th November, the Commodore Superintendent Contract Built Ships, made his final inspection; as the inspecting party left, the rum came in, and even though the ship was not yet Her Majesty's property, we in the advance party began to feel part of the Navy again. We moved onboard that night after a last meal in digs—we'd "Got a ship."



Early next morning, the balance of some 250 men arrived in the yard, after an overnight sleeper trip from Portsmouth in two special trains. Chief Cook Vella and his men had bacon and eggs ready for them, the advance party guided them round like "old hands" and in a very short time all were settled. In came the really important items, like the beer, the Wardroom stores, and the charts; then "UP SPIRITS," clean ship and muster the Duty Part—we were in business.

The climax of the whole proceedings came at 10.45 the next day, Thursday, 15th November, 1962. A bitterly cold wind hit us as we marched nine abreast onto the jetty by the ship, led by a Royal Marine Band. The ceremony was watched by Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Mr. R. W. Johnson (Managing Director, Cammell Laird), the Chaplain of the Fleet, Sir Alfred Sims (Director General Ships), The Mayor of Birkenhead, The Commodore Superintendent Contract Built Ships, five ex-Captains and many other veterans of the previous H.M.S. Devonshire, and over 200 members of the Ships Company's families. After a short service conducted by the Chaplain of the Fleet, came the reading of the commissioning warrant, and, finally the moment which cannot fail to move even the oldest hands amongst us—to the strains of the National Anthem, the White Ensign was slowly hoisted at the Ensign staff for the first time. Now we were really Her Majesty's Ship Devonshire's men.

*THIS was the beginning of a commission which during the next eighteen months was to see the ship :*

*Steam over 60,000 miles.*

*Welcome 45,000 visitors of whom over 70 were of flag rank.*

*Move north to Greenock, west to Washington, south to Trinidad and east to Malta.*

*Consume over 2,000 gallons of rum and to eat over a third of a million pounds of potatoes.*

*Now, you've got a nice ship here, so just be careful*

