



The Weathermen

A few miscellaneous facts and figures:

- a. The survey boat JAMES CAIRD, during the 43 days that she was detached from the ship, ran a total of 575 miles of sounding lines resulting in approximately 6000 soundings being inked in onto the new chart.
- b. The work boat ran 27 miles of sounding lines.
- c. The ship ran a total of 680 miles of sounding lines - the whole covering an area of 320 miles.
- d. The shore parties consumed between them 498 compositions, 448 booster rations, 8 sheep and one cow using a total of 70 gallons of paraffin, 10 gallons of meths and 8 bottles of calor gas with which to cook them.
- e. 44 sounding marks were erected; 10 pairs of No 8 trousers rendered useless; one 10-man tent destroyed (by wind); and 458 gallons of diesel used by the boat (which was also written off at an initial cost of £40,000). A large number of flying hours was also accumulated by members of the department.

## THE METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF 2 WEATHERMEN

It's 0245. The silence of the Bridge is broken by the sudden whirring noise of the aspirated psychrometer as 'Taff' Hadland collects the information for the 0600 Zulu weather observation. Soon the information will be flashed around the world to a million eager weathermen who can hardly wait to learn that South Georgia is cold, wet and windy.

Meanwhile, on 1 Deck, the regular throbbing of the engine is broken by the whirring noise from Schoolie Tunstall's throat as he snores away the remainder of the night. He knows that South Georgia is cold, wet and windy, because he read it somewhere in a book. His mind is at rest now, preparing itself for the mental exertions of the coming day.

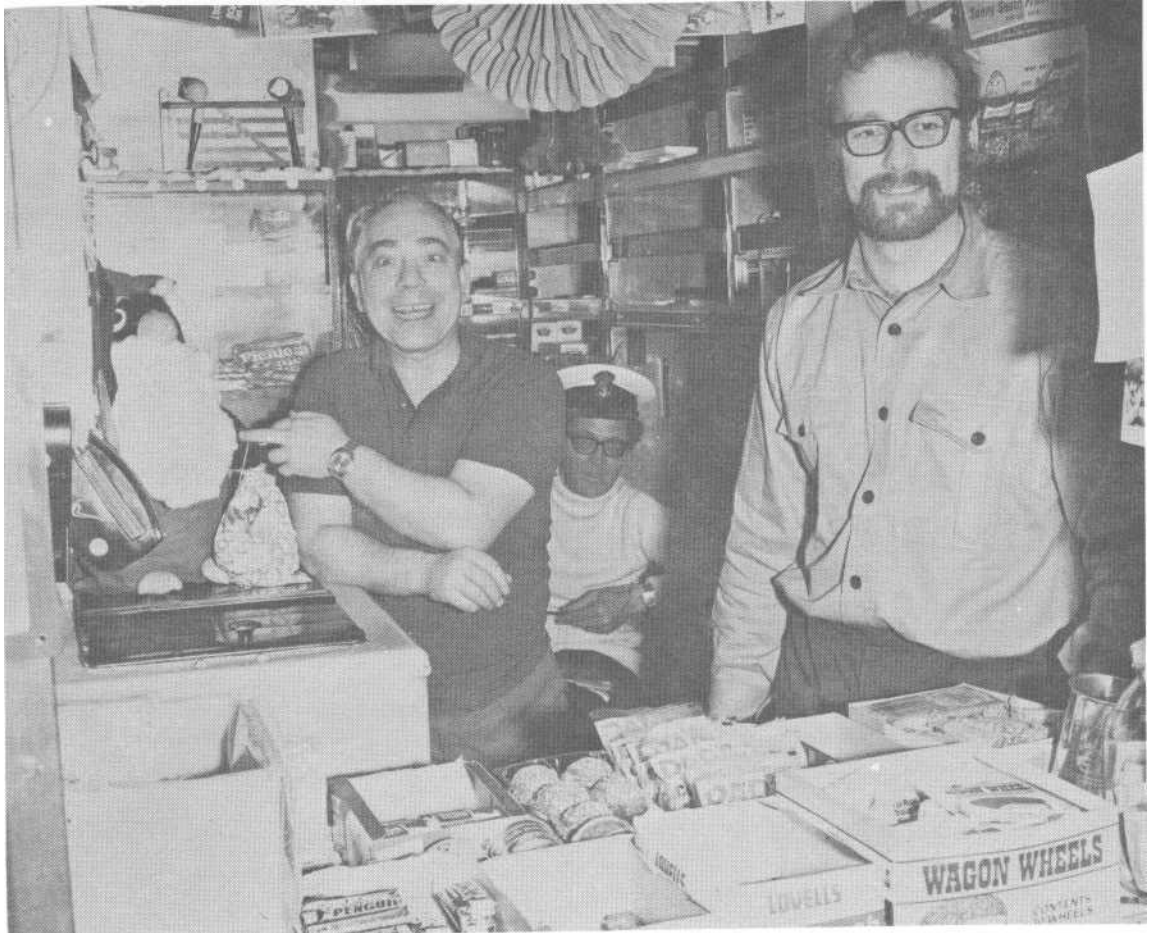
These mental exertions start at 0815, when 4 or 5 flying men in green hover above the met chart demanding to be told details of the weather they'll encounter while in the air. But Taff and Schoolie have done this before, and they are fully prepared. A well practiced stroll on the Bridge Wings, looking up knowingly at the sky, is enough to convince the customer that the figures written on the briefing board have some mysterious scientific basis, and the aircrew nod wisely as Schoolie intones his "Schoolie's Standard Forecast No 8" .... Cloud base lowering in precipitation to 800 ft as the cold frontal trough approaches from the North-West .... orographic cloud on coastal mountains reducing vertical visibility to nil throughout the day .... wind backing and increasing to Westerly gale force 8 or severe gale force 9 by the end of the flying period.

The trouble with "Standard Forecast No 8", which is not a weatherman's favourite, is that it is usually followed by an immediate clearance of cloud, both frontal and orographic, and a veering and decrease of the wind to easterly force 1 or 2.

No, the finest forecast of them all is surely "Schoolies Standard Forecast No 1" which Taff even knows off by heart in Welsh. "... severe local effects will cause the wind to vary in both speed and direction .... partly cloudy or overcast with a chance of bright periods or showers .... the outlook in the indefinite future is changeable".

While this strategic encounter with the Flight is proceeding in the Charthouse, Taff Hadland is down in the Survey Chartroom tuning into the satellite passing 800 miles overhead. Without doubt, this is the most welcome piece of kit to be fitted onboard since flushable heads were introduced. The sceptics among us maintain that the daily cloud pictures that the machine produces serve only to explain why yesterday's forecast was wrong.

'On the contrary', says Schoolie .... 'Jahwl' says Taff, "what about the time we used it to forecast the clearance of fog to within 10 minutes on the way to Montevideo on 30 Jan? (The dates of such spectacular success are firmly imprinted on both their memories. Of course, there are many such examples which we could quote, if only space permitted.



The Canteen Staff

The day is now well advanced and the 2 intrepid weathermen have their daily conference in depth about the likely behaviour of the elements for the rest of the day, and, in particular during that critical period between 1200 and 1325 when the only thing in everyone's mind is "Will there be Bronzie or not?" such a confusingly direct question is the kind most feared by a weatherman, since it is clear that only one of the two possible answers will be accepted politely.

There was indeed a period of 4 days, immediately after leaving Buenos Aires, when Taff and Schoolie seriously discussed immediate job changes to avoid the impending physical attacks which seemed inevitable if that damned cloud didn't move from directly overhead very soon. Taff was considering disguising himself as a bootie, because nobody trifles with those guys, while Schoolie considered taking up teaching full-time.

Having decided what the weather is going to do for the next 18 hours, they now devote some time to practical cloud observation. They have found that this is most effectively performed lying horizontally for long periods. Taff's observation point is the Flight Deck, Schoolie's the Bridge Roof. This is a very trying job, for as they lie there observing, it is very difficult to ignore the dozens of bodies all around them doing absolutely nothing.

The afternoon passes, and soon it is time to write up the days meteorological events, and prepare for the satellite's next few orbits. To prepare himself for these tasks Taff does PT from 1700-1730. Schoolie does PT from 1700-1703, since he's found from long experience that physical exertion can only make you feel worse not better.

Soon it is supper time, and perhaps the most trying part of the day, for this is when one's mess mates can be quite merciless in their criticism of one's performance. There are certain standard questions which mess mates ask at this time of day. There's the cunningly phrased, "What about the weather then?", and the brilliantly incisive observation, "It's dark, did you forecast that, ho ho ho". Then there's the provocative "Where's your Force 12 then Schoolie?" or the infuriating, "Must be local effects again Taff". But Taff and Schoolie are not novices at this game, and they can take mental punishment without flinching. After all, tomorrow is another day, and all they have to do is produce a day of hot sun to become everybody's friends again.

They say that Taffs off to Yeovilton next, to instruct jet pilots on methods of avoiding icebergs in the Channel, and that Schoolie's going off to the North Pole, because that's the furthest they can send him without making it look too obvious. And as they disappear through Unicorn Gate you'll hear them muttering something about .... variable winds tomorrow, with confused sky heralding changeable weather .....

## NAAFI - ENDURANCE STYLE

ANTARCTICA: The NAAFI on board HMS ENDURANCE, Ice Patrol Ship, is the NAAFI Retail Outlet that travels the furthest south in the World, and I work for them.

Joining NAAFI in early Sep 74 as a Trainee Canteen Manager and just missing the beer storing (Who in the NCS envies that?) and leaving Portsmouth on a bleak 3 Oct day heading for Dakar, Senegal our first stop. The first couple of days warm clothing was in order; after that the hangar roof looked like a cruise ship, sunbathing bodies all over the deck. Guess who was on hand to supply sunglasses and suntan lotion? Mr D A Lockett, canteen manager and I.

In Dakar, the Senegal Navy arranged a coach trip of all notable places of interest. Unfortunately the bus broke down after 3 places. Fortunately it was just outside Dakar Airport Bar. Three hours and six beers later another bus turned up and then we had, what appeared through a tipsy haze, the fastest bus tour in history. Not many people got clear camera shots! The one scheduled stop we did make was at an 'Artists' village where the local wood carvings were put up for sale. I bought about 15 pounds worth, everybody else on the trip would have bought them for about a quarter of that. Still everyone gets caught at least once when they go abroad for the first time, don't they? There's one thing about NAAFI they don't see you off despite what a minority of Naval Personnel say.

Crossing the Atlantic we also crossed the Equator. The ship's company organised an elaborate ceremony. Other 'first-timers' and I got a ducking after being insulted by King Neptune's lackey and chief justice. I am assured that there was no truth in the vicious 'buzz' that the Navigator didn't know the latitude when we crossed the line.

Next stop was Salvador, Brazil. The night life is frantic and highly enjoyable. The local beer is potent and the measures for Rum and Coke are very different from Portsmouth, about 6 parts rum to one part coke! The Disco's just go on all night and most bars have bands in them that play until the 'late' early hours. Sales of 'ALKA SELTZERS' increased here!

Next down the coast of South America to Montevideo, Uruguay. Within minutes of securing alongside in the Harbour, leather goods salesmen seemed to be just about everywhere on board, still their goods are excellent value! Everyone was very friendly and the local 'Shell' club organised us Asado (very alcoholic barbeque) for the ship's company. The streets of Monte', sometimes resemble a 1930 movie, the cars are that old, most of them anyway. Another point of great interest is the food. At 3 am we went into a restaurant, ordered one foot diameter 'T' bone steaks, wine and trimmings, twice, the cost was less than one pound the lot, for the best steak I've ever tasted. Sales of 'Andrews Liver Salt' increased here.

Down the River Plate into the open sea, 3 days later we arrived at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands. I did not know quite what to expect from this place on the doorstep of the Antarctic. The first impression was the roofs of the houses, light blue, dark blue, reds, greens, even the cathedral had a red corrugated iron roof. When you first arrive ashore you get the impression that you've arrived in a small British village, except that everyone who owns a car seems to own a Land Rover, which gives you an idea of the roads outside Stanley, which are only tracks.

After our first stop at Port Stanley, we headed South for Grytviken, in South Georgia. On our way down we saw our first icebergs. The first 10 icebergs must have been photographed a hundred times each. Grytviken, an old whaling station and settlement, is now deserted. The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) have now set up their main base across the cove. When the whaling people left they left everything behind, Tractors, workshops and whaling boats all mostly intact. The main surprise of the BAS base was the wildlife, Elephant seals right up to the doors virtually. A friend and I spent half a day looking for a penguin to *photograph*, we had to give up, but after viewing Shackleton's grave we found one of them was walking along the path with us.

After some surveying we went back to Stanley for Christmas. The people are very hospitable and at Christmas one such friendly person invited me to Christmas dinner and several parties. (Guess who had 2 Christmas dinners, one on Christmas eve and one on Christmas day). Christmas on board BMS ENDURANCE, finished at 1000 hrs 26 Dec 74, by order of the First Lieutenant. On shore they had not heard of this and so I and other members of the ship's company went to 'Stanley Races' which is like a very large Gymkana. The main purpose of this event, is so that the people who live in the isolated settlements, all come and meet at Christmas. With such friendly people sales of 'ENDURANCE' mementoes from NAAFI increased about this time.

Then it was Mar Del Plata, for the start of the New Year in the sun. Mar Del Plata, is the holiday resort for the capital of Argentina, Buenos Aires. So with the sun, 2 days station leave, Disco's, Beaches and restaurants, our New Year's break was not unenjoyable. We even celebrated the New Year twice, UK's 3 hours before Argentina's.

After this the most picturesque part of the journey began. The ship set up a survey boat camp party who's job it was to survey Harmony Cove. Then we went to the Weddel Sea, turned into the Gerlache Strait went through the beautiful Neumeyer Channel to the American Palmer Base. This base has a colossal penguin colony on an island just in front of it. At the British base on Argentine Island, I met a very friendly penguin and his Mrs. The trip between these 2 bases was through the Le Maire Channel. The sea was clear, the sun shining and the scenery and icebergs all reflected innumerable colours. The sale of films from the NAAFI Canteen soared.

We crossed the Antarctic circle at 0509 hrs one morning but I was obviously not awake as I never felt a bump or anything, but I now qualify for the famous blue nose certificate.

Next we visited a mainly black ash covered volcanic island, Deception Island and steamed around the crater, on the inside! (one section of the crater's wall is below sea level).

Who would have thought when I joined NAAFI from the Insurance Industry, that I would see such fantastic sights or meet so many different people, but the best new experience of all is that when you live on a ship you don't have far to travel to work!



## ENDURANCE FLIGHT

After the ship returned from the previous season the flight disembarked to their parent station HMS DAEDALUS, Lee-on-Solent. The people who had already completed 2 seasons going on leave and draft, while the one-only season personnel took 14 days leave, returning to 'Lee' to begin the work-up for the new season.

Awaiting the flight arrival had been the newcomers who, having already had their leave, were relied upon to prepare both the aircraft for the annual MARTSU Survey.

Immediately after leave the major task was to rectify all the defects found in both the aircraft during the survey. Luckily they had both been well maintained and there was only one major repair job that required to be done, that being a step on one of the aircraft. All other jobs were merely replacements of worn bits and pieces, which occur quite frequently due to natural wear.

With both the aircraft fully serviceable, the work-up period really got under way. The main task to bring the newcomers up in line with the 'veterans', to become a well practised and efficient unit.

Many hours were spent burning the midnight oil, keeping up with the endless reams of paperwork, busily maintaining the 2 aircraft and generally preparing the aircraft for the next days flying.

We experienced many inspections, to ensure our paperwork was up to the correct standard, that our standards and practices were up to the required level for maintaining the aircraft and that we could also safely assemble missiles and prepare the aircraft, by fitting all the associated bits and pieces to fly with them. Come back 'Sam' Smith all is forgiven.

During the work-up period the flight had to go on various detachments, a week was spent at RAF Valley, near Holyhead in North Wales, for the aircrew to gain experience in mountain flying. There are indeed plenty of mountains, and plenty of sheep, but no-one heard the familiar phrase 'Get your sheep off my mountain ...' spoken with a Welsh accent. The locals were very hospitable, especially one young nurse, no doubt Joe Fallon will remember her well, let's hope she has not forgotten him.

A week was spent at Portland, doing live missile firings and Search and Rescue practices, on the whole quite an unnerving experience for the greenies. We were worried whether the missiles would fire successfully and secondly aircraft 435 had a total electrical power failure during one of the SAR exercises. Brum Worton was heard to give a sigh of relief when 435 landed safely as also did his number one Steve Tomlin. Although the pilot, Lt Arthur Swain, didn't appear to be concerned at all.

From Portland the flight went to Yeovil. There the aircrew underwent some extremely vigorous tests on their flying capabilities. Unlike passing a driving test to obtain a licence to drive a car, these chaps have to be put through their paces at regular intervals.



Exercising high line transfer at Portland



Assisting the BAS geologists South

It was during this week that married men Lt Cdr Peter Hurst and Dave Sampson had their only chance of being close to home while on the flight.

As the days grew closer to our embarkation back to the ship, so the inspections by teams from 'Lee', FONAC and FOCAS came more fast and furious. In each of these tests the Missile tests became one of the flight's biggest headaches.

The flight did embark eventually, after trouble here there and everywhere getting the ship out of refit, during the third week in September. It has been rumoured that the Captain said at the time "I'll get this ship to Portland even if I have to use oars". However, once embarked we sailed almost immediately for Portland, without the oars I might add.

Spending a short week there, being put through our paces again, along with the remainder of the ship's company. We had numerous exercises including the old favourites, a simulated aircraft precautionary landing and an aircraft crash on deck, all of these we could possibly come up against while deployed luckily we did not, other than one scare when one aircraft landed on deck with a smoke filled cockpit caused by oil contaminating the rotor brake disc. All the drill practices we had done before had proved their worth, and the flight and the ship's fire and emergency party took these exercises in their stride.

The ship's company dance found Brum Worton Duty Petty Officer, and he is convinced that it was a FIXED job, however, he had the laugh the next morning looking at all the 'ill' crew.

The following day being Families Day the flight put on a display of SAR. It would seem that the water that day was far from warm, Roy Tarrant took the plunge to be rescued and came back looking rather blue. A special request here goes to Ian Kennedy's little daughter Lisa, "Please don't hang off the 'dustbin' aerials", because Joe Fallon just loves replacing them.

A sad day for most the next day, when the ship sailed from Portsmouth Harbour, leaving behind our loved ones, and Jan Pearce's now famous Bats Flutter.

Yes indeed, we had to sail without Jan Pearce's Bats Flutter. I can't say truly how many signals that were sent to and from the ship about those things. But the poor Radio Supervisor Andy Anderson, was doing his nut with all the signals he had to cope with.

Thirty-nine days out of UK we arrived at Port Stanley. The climate and scenery come to that were quite different to the tropical weather we had experienced on the way down. Calling in at such places as Dakar, Salvador and Montevideo.

While in Stanley, we flew both aircraft to transfer ammunition from the ship to Moody Brook, the Royal Naval Party 8901 HQ. Compass swings were also carried out due to a major change of latitude.

Sailing from Stanley on 14 Nov, the ship headed for South Georgia, the sight of the ship's survey task for this season and the first of the Flight's intensive flying periods.

Transporting our Royal Marines detachment up into the mountains of South Georgia for 14 days, or so, to do mountaineering and survival exercises.

Transferring stores from the BAS Base at Grytviken up to the BAS camp sites, also up the mountains. We had to do many rescue flights to determine suitable survey camp sites now and for the future. We had to deploy the survey equipment, camp equipment and rations. To give valuable information to people at Taunton and Birmingham University we had to spend long hours carrying out vertical photography of the area. Even Bill Timkey had to get airborne on more occasions than either he or myself can remember to take oblique photographs with his expensive camera equipment.

It was all in all a very hectic time, although quite successful as well. The record for hours flown set in 1971 was broken during this month, the aircraft having done some 99 hours in the air.

On 4 Dec we had finally left the South Georgia area and had arrived off the Shag Rocks. A group of rocks situated on the Antarctic convergence zone. For once they were visible, but the seas were extremely rough. It looked as though a planned attempt to land people on the rocks would have to be postponed. However, after some deliberation, it was decided that an attempt should be made. One aircraft was slowly and painfully ranged on deck, and finally launched successfully, much to the relief of some and to the amazement of others. With the Royal Marines landed on the rocks, the aircraft carried out vertical photography, before returning onboard with the somewhat "smelly" Royal Marines. To be honest, they stank to high heaven. It was a very hazardous landing, and it was with great relief that the aircraft was slowly and painfully stowed safely in the hangar once more.

This having marked the first occasion of man, setting foot on Shag rocks. British at any rate. There was a buzz that the Russians had been there before us.

The ship arrived back in Stanley to refuel and pick up some long awaited mail. The Flight also provided a fly past, flying the ensign and the national flag of the Falkland Islands, to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of the Falklands. The ship's company were also on parade. Strong winds and heavy rain, dampened everyone's spirits and spoilt a very auspicious occasion.

Since leaving South Georgia the Flight had been busy preparing for a FOCAS inspection. A very sore point amongst the Flight and ship's company. The team, 2 Lt Commanders, were flown especially from UK to spend 22 days with us. Taking all of 3 days to get here and at least another 4 or 5 to get back to UK, spending 3 days in Buenos Aires. What with all their subsistence and first class air passage it is estimated their little trip cost the tax payer £2,000 for each of them.

They arrived on the Monday afternoon of 9 Dec, as the ship had delayed sailing by 24 hours to pick them up, we sailed immediately they were onboard heading for the West Falkland Islands areas, to commence another survey task. The Flight's task once again was to recce suitable survey points and land the survey party and all their survey equipment, camping equipment and rations. A lot of vertical photography was also carried out. Taking High Altitude photographs of almost all the islands in the area.

One incident that we shall remember well, is the time the Flight flew ashore a party of "Cowboys", to round up a couple of steers. Cows actually and Tom Sawyer and Ray Philpott were among the "Cowboys" that had to kill and butcher them. Fresh meat, yes, but we were eating beef for days afterwards.

The survey of the West Falkland Islands was completed when the 2 aircraft flew some 6,000 lbs of stores and fuel ashore to the survey camp that we were leaving in the area over the Christmas and New Year period, to carry on with the survey task.

On Monday 23 Dec, the ship sailed into Stanley Harbour, dropping anchor at 0915. The beginning of the Christmas break. A time for the Flight to catch up on a lot of outstanding paperwork and little jobs that get pushed to one side during intensive flying periods. Boxing Day also marked the halfway point in this season. Eighty-four days done, eighty-four days to go, before the ship arrived back in UK.

The ship sailed from Stanley again at 1000 on Friday 27 Dec. The weather was extremely dull and the seas rough. For the majority of the Flight it seemed that work would never cease, because now much chipping and painting was needed to give the "back end" a face lift before the ship arrived in Mar Del Plata. It seems a wonder that any of the white paintwork ever received a coat of fresh paint, because the ship was really rolling and pitching, and it was as much as anybody could do to stand up, let alone paint half the time.

After the Church Service held on Sunday 29 Dec, the Flight witnessed Lt Nigel Crocker receive a Commendation from FONAC, for activities during SAR operations while serving with the Federal German Navy unit stationed at RNAS Culdrose. Immediately after that, the Flight junior ratings had to change from their best uniforms, into working rig, to continue painting.

The ship arrived at Mar Del Plata at 0900 on 30 Dec, to begin the mid-season break. Another incident that will be remembered especially by 3 members of the Flight, Stew Mageean, Jock Magreggor and Steve Tomlin, the one hauser (rope to us Airey Fairies attached to one of the tugs, helping us to get alongside, snapped. They've never reacted so quickly on the Flight deck as they did then. I don't think the rope had finished its recoil before they'd flattened themselves to the deck.

Yes indeed, we even help the seamen, tie the ship up alongside. What would they do without us "Airey Fairies" and our "Petrol Pigeons"?

In Mar Del Plata the ship was split into two and 2 days station leave was given. That is, the ship's company were split into two and 2 days leave given. Some of the lads like Roy Tarrant and Ian Kennedy took the opportunity to get away from the ship for a while and went camping.

With about 30 ickies worth of chips, Steve Tomlin was fascinated at the amount of money the "Big" gamblers placed at the roulette wheels in the casino. "It cost 30 ickies to get in".

While in Mar Del Plata, we received some long awaited spare tail rotors, one of which was unpacked immediately and put on one of the aircraft, the one being removed having very badly worn bearings. Also we received a not so urgently required aircraft engine. We had had one go while in South Georgia, and having replaced it with one of our 2 serviceable spares, the powers that be thought it a good idea that we should still have 2 serviceable spares. Weighing 900 lb and valued at £41,000, give or take a pound or two it arrived in a pick-up truck, rotors piled haphazardly on top of a parcel going by air cost almost £1 per lb in weight. I hate to imagine the cost of shipping that engine out. A fair amount of money has been spent telling us all to be "Cost Conscious" in the Navy.

There had been some sorry looking sights, the mornings after the nights before, and needless to say quite a few people were relieved when the ship sailed from Mar Del Plata on Monday 6 Jan. Those South Americans certainly do know how to celebrate, not only the New Year, but anything else apparently.

The day after sailing we began flying again. Presumably because the aircrew required to get the feel of things once again. One feels almost certain that these chaps could fly in their sleep what with all the flying they do while the ship is doing her survey work. However ....

We even managed to carry out some missile drills. While trying to sort out fuel computer snags, which the "Grabbers" blamed the "Greenies" for and vice versa. Poor Joe Fallen also had some unfathomable snags with his radio gear, which at first they all blamed on the "Greenies". However, Brum Worton showed them, didn't he? It's no wonder he complains of ulcers.

On Thursday 9 Jan. The Flight disturbed everyone else by turning to early. The ship had reached the West Falkland Islands, and our task was to recover the surveyors and all their equipment. Whom, if you remember, we had left behind, just before Christmas.

Lt Arthur Swain will have cause to remember the occasion quite well, because the computer snag that we thought had been cured, raised it's ugly head once more. But it was even nastier. "The damned thing just wouldn't respond to the speed select lever".

The ship was in and out of Stanley in 7 hours on Friday 10 Jan having stopped only to refuel and to take on some "Petrol" for the 2 "Pigeons". That isn't usually a term we in the air would usually use, by the way. But it is one which the General Service fraternity will understand.