

man carries in the middle of his waistband. That none of the audience was slashed is still a mystery ! This man also carried the much-prized silver-bound rifle, and bandolier filled with polished brass cartridges. In this area, a gun costs about 150/- and a wife costs the same!

We then drove on, past the old village of mud stone and cadjan huts, to see the wells and irrigation canals that are so essential to this agricultural scheme. Fortunately there is a good underground water supply which is easily reached. Much ploughing is still done with a wooden plough, as in Biblical times, but modern methods are slowly coming in, as more tractors become available "on hire". Round one of the wells was a large orange grove with green and yellow oranges on the trees. Guarding the grove was a small boy, sitting in a large nest of rags on top of an old tree. One of the officers asked the Assistant P.A. if he could pick an orange. The A.P.A. replied, "Certainly", adding that his uncle owned the grove. Although the officer appeared to be out of sight of the nesting guardian, no sooner had he picked the orange than the small boy let out a yell, and was down from the tree and round to the scene of the "crime", and he took a lot of convincing that valid permission had indeed been given. He strongly disapproved of the whole business!

It was now time to fly on to Mukeiras, on top of the high plateau, which is over 6,700 ft in these parts. The Valetta soared easily over the perpendicular, jagged cliffs that lay about five miles to the North of Lodar, and a quarter of an hour later we had landed on the airstrip. Here we were met by Major Stamp and three of his officers, and an escort of Levies in two Scout cars. The ubiquitous Land Rovers took us up a rocky track to a look-out post on a hill two miles away, which overlooked the Yemen. On arrival at the hilltop, the Levies immediately took cover behind a dry-stone dyke, which was used as a protection from stray bullets. Two of the officers from separate hills carried out an observation sweep over the the Yemen territory. It was interesting to listen to them conversing over the R/T, and one realised that one was listening to two well-trained and keen young men who were thoroughly enjoying their Active Service.

Major Stamp told us of a prolonged battle fought about here the previous Sunday. The local tribesmen had engaged a Yemeni tribe in rifle fire all morning, at a reasonably safe range. They were eventually persuaded by Major Stamp to withdraw at least some distance back, thereby enticing about forty of the Yemeni onto a convenient hillside, where they were pounded by a 75mm. field gun from in front, and by the Scout cars from the flanks. After several

hours of fighting, four Yemeni were killed and some wounded. One Levy was wounded. This illustrates the difficulty of ever achieving a decisive



Aden Levies on the Border

result in this wild country and against such wiry and wily opponents. It is regrettable to have to add that the Yemeni "blotted their copy book" that afternoon, by shooting a field-worker long after the battle was over. The tribesmen usually stain their clothes, hands and faces with indigo, which makes them very difficult to see against the rocks. On the way back to the airstrip, down the steep, rocky and bumpy track, the Major remarked that this was the main road, and that a bus travelled over it every week! He also told of the scenes which had occurred a short time before, when it was decided to recruit volunteers for the Levies from the local tribe, for the first time. Seventy were finally selected from the three hundred volunteers, but the Major and the local Sheikh, together with the fortunate seventy, were besieged in the local fort for some hours by the angry, stone-throwing, disappointed two hundred and thirty. Regular food and pay, uniform, a rifle and ammunition and the chance of fighting make service in the Levies very popular.

On our way back in the Valetta, it was possible to see extensive areas of the plateau under cultivation, usually with a central green strip denoting the source of the water supply. We quickly crossed over the Lodar Plain and returned by the Wadi Hassan route. Approaching Aden, we had a good view of the salt pans, looking like a draughts-board, and of a slim, grey cruiser in the distant harbour.

For four brief hours, we had been in a totally different world, and returned with a much greater appreciation of the problems to be faced and overcome by the Army and Royal Air Force in the Protectorate.

Aden to Berbera in a Whaler

THE idea of a long-distance whaler expedition had been in several people's minds for a long time and now, with the ship paying a short visit to Berbera en-route from Aden to Trincomalee, the opportunity had arrived. Needless to say, there were plenty of volunteers, and from these one officer and four ratings formed the crew for each boat. The organisation-launched, as needs be, in a mass of paper - soon began to bear fruit, and a mountain of stores ranging from smoke-markers to water-purification pills appeared in the After Diesel Compartment. The boats and all their gear were given a good overhaul and face-lift; the sail-maker could be found at almost any hour of the day making 'specials' for the expedition; and for the rest of it not a Department escaped being cajoled into producing some necessity - and all responded magnificently.

Finally, by noon on the 6th January, with the ship on her way to the firing area where we were to be dumped after a 6" shoot, everything was ready; and a few hours later, even as the sun was sinking fast on the horizon, we were slipped, and soon the raucous noises and cheers from GAMBIA's guardrails faded away, and we were left bobbing about on a darkening and very vast ocean. The boats were soon rigged, gear sorted out, and the sails set for the night; and with only the occasional blink of an inquiring Aldis, a murmur on the 615, or sudden scramble of someone being sick over the side to disturb our first night, we headed in company for Africa. So far, so good. A calm sea, slight swell, and a light N.E. wind to push us gently along - and a billion stars to steer by.

By dawn the wind had freshened a bit, and the First whaler was leading by about two miles; we in the Second soon put matters right, however, by bringing in the oars slung outboard of the lee gunwale, and from that moment proved ours the faster boat. The day passed quickly - cooking, eating, dishing-up and the post-prandial zizz all assume a major place in the routine in such circumstances. Cooking in an open boat proved to be not as impossible as expected, in spite of such minor troubles as seasick cooks, bilge fires, and spray coming inboard. Before dinner, the day was made famous by a telegram which arrived via our 622 set for A. B. Ray, in the First whaler; surely he must be one of very few who has received the news of the arrival of a daughter whilst in such singular surroundings. By way of celebration, our as yet untouched beer supply was broached and the arrival of Miss Ray greeted in the only proper manner.

Just before noon we were provided with a diversion in the form of a Shackleton aircraft making fruitless, though precisely executed searches for us, all several miles astern. During the afternoon, however, he found us, and was able to tell us where

we were, and the ship of our progress. From the position he gave us we had covered only forty-three miles in twenty hours - not good, but all we'd had up to then was a force three at most, accompanied by a gradually growing swell. The weather very soon changed, however, and an hour before dark the boats hove-to and took in a reef, while the crews got ready for what promised to be a fair blow. And blow it did, remaining at a low force five throughout the night. The wind, needless to say, was most welcome, and once the trick of steering along each wave as it approached from the port quarter had been mastered, there was nothing to do but a certain amount of hard work for those on the tiller. All night, as good fortune had it, not a star was obscured, and all the moon came out to watch our progress.

At about 0415, from both boats, a long dark smudge could be seen above the southern horizon; within thirty minutes we could make out a faint white line which was to be the beach; and ten minutes later we were there, sliding gently up onto the shore of Africa. Shades of Columbus and Horatio Hornblower! - we had made it! No falling down and kissing the ground however, (indeed, one member of the Second whaler's crew was observed to accord the new land far less dignified treatment); this was clearly Africa, but it remained to be seen what part of it.

The boats had been out of contact with one another since 2330; but looking around us in the first light of morning, soon after landing, we in the Second whaler were soon able to pick up the lights of the First, which had beached across the bay, and some three miles from us. As daylight advanced, so the wind dropped, and very soon there was not even enough for the First whaler to leave its beach, where the crew had cooked a meal and got used to being ashore again, and beat up towards the camp which we had established and where by now the smell of cooking was strong. A major disappointment was the discovery that the 622 radio was well and truly u/s - although it had not functioned during the night we had had no proper opportunity to have a thorough check of the thing; now, however, not a squeak came out of it, and the highly impressive 100-ft. aerial which we had rigged while the breakfast was cooking served no purpose, and we were as alone as ever.

Although, ever since leaving the ship, we had steered a course well to the East of that we required to make good, the prevailing currents and the N.E. wind had, we surmised, carried us far to leeward, and before continuing the journey it was clearly prudent to find out on which side of Berbera we had landed. Having eaten, therefore, and with the First whaler still trying to join us, all the Second's crew (with the exception of one guard-cum-welcoming committee for the other boat) hastened

off to identify what looked like ruins about four miles away and which, were they confirmed as such, would have indicated where we were.

At this point our story becomes two, for the First whaler, after struggling across the bay on what wind there was, and on arriving within three hundred yards of our camp, found itself confronted with a fast-emerging reef; on return from their shore expedition, the crew of the Second whaler too were later to observe how singularly fortunate had been their landfall in Africa. As the tide receded there appeared not merely a short line of rocks across what had been our landfall course, but an unbroken reef which stretched from one side of the bay to the other, totally enclosing anyone to landward of it at all except high tide, and similarly keeping out others, such as the First whaler, who had not 'caught the tide.' Thus frustrated, our fellow-adventurers decided to push on westwards in the hope that Berbera still lay down-wind of us. Their misfortune was not repeated, and hope, as we shall see, was rewarded.

By the time the party from the Second whaler had pushed off to view the 'ruins', the sun was climbing steadily, and already was burning us fiercely. But what might otherwise have proved a long, dull and exhausting flog across four miles of coastal plain (flat as a pancake, with only thorn-bushes and a species of tough grass to relieve the monotony of sand until the hills, two miles inland, were reached) was given interest by the discovery of an animal's tracks (those of a large cat, perhaps the size of a lynx); the sand crabs, which fled at enormous speed on their points, like ballet dancers, whenever anyone approached; and the hermit crabs. These last were always good for a laugh. Not big, they seem to choose the most handsome shells to live in: and walking along the beach we frequently came across small groups of these shells all proceeding in an orderly fashion with 'mother' and 'father' in the lead, until the shadow of one of us fell on them, or we approached within five or six feet, when the entire procession would stop together, doubtless hoping that the intruders would not stop to investigate who were hiding inside a few innocent-looking seashells.

As we got nearer the hill on top of which we hoped to find our ruins, we could make out a small cluster of fishermen's huts; and having arrived there, we introduced ourselves to a gathering of verminous-looking locals who clearly had no other interest in the world than keeping themselves alive, which they appeared to do exclusively on a fish diet judging by the smell and remains scattered around. It would be interesting, in retrospect, to hear their views on their visitors, one of whom had a rifle slung over his shoulder; another an axe; while a third, suffering mildly from a sunburnt nose and lips, had so daubed himself with ointment as to look more like an aborigine than a member of the white man's clan.

Although from where we were we could see that our 'ruins' proved to be no more than some

strangely-eroded rocks, we were able to learn from these people where we were, and so, after presenting them with a couple of tins of fruit we returned to the camp, where we learned of the First whaler's efforts to join us, and eventual departure.

After the inevitable but excellent pot-mess for dinner, the rest of the day was spent in cleaning-up, sorting out gear and, since it was clear we would be there overnight, rigging a more satisfactory tent. This was vital, as the sand, which by three o'clock was being stirred up by a fresh N.E. breeze, became not only annoying but a positive menace when it came to cooking, sleeping or drinking beer (every beer-can, to be of use, must have two holes, and sand will get in anywhere). Eventually, by means of an impressive structure of oars, blankets, flags and hammocks, we succeeded in keeping out both sand and heat. (Moral - one cannot take too much codline, spunyarn, etc. on a trip like this).

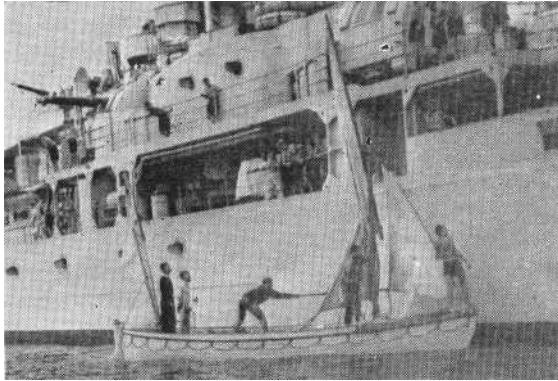
'Living native,' as we were, one's day is regulated by the sun, and darkness was soon upon us. We had just finished dishing-up the evening meal when a dark form swathed in coloured cotton appeared on the fringe of the lamplight; Somalis are no less sociable than anybody else, and having accepted a cigarette this one squatted down by the tent and puffed away. He soon moved, but only a few yards, for presently we found him behind our tent scraping out a hole in the sand in which, having divested himself of his robes, he lay down and went to sleep, with his 'clothes' over him.

Our night passed peacefully enough, while each of us (except the chef who was detailed to greet us with steaming ki first thing in the morning) did two hours' sentry-go and guard on the boat-necessary in view of our fellow-squatter and the animal's tracks we had found early in the day.

Awake at first light, and having seen off all our ki supply in one great glorious brew, we hastened to strike camp and re-embark as soon as the boat re-floated on the high tide. By 0730 she was once more tugging at her stern anchor, and the fresh N.E. wind which had come up with the dawn promised a swift passage to Berbera. At 0745 our shore-line was cast off, and swinging round into the wind we headed seaward under mizzen and fore, streaming the drogue (partly as a trial, partly to reduce speed) whilst passing over the now-submerged reef. Clear of the danger, we set course and all sail for Berbera before a 'soldier's wind'; and by 1730 we were alongside the ship again, to the relief of many with whom we had been out of touch for thirty-six hours.

In the meantime, while we had been becoming used to life in the desert, the First whaler had returned to the ship. Having turned away to the west after being foiled by the reef, and with the object of reaching Berbera by nightfall if possible, the trysail was set, and the scene of our arrival in Africa was soon left far behind. Seven knots in a

whaler under full canvas is an exhilarating experience and this performance, coupled with the boats' behaviour on the crossing from Aden, bears out the feeling among both crews that given the food and water, a whaler can be 'left to get on with it' under almost any conditions.



The Return

The run westward was as uneventful as it was to be later for the Second whaler. During the afternoon, however, an unidentified animal browsing near a bush was sighted on the foreshore, and this discovery resulted in much discussion and lively argument as to what it could be. At the time of writing, however, it would appear certain that the 'livestock' was in fact our Film Officer, and the 'bush' the jeep in which he had set out along the coast to try and sight the 'lost' whalers. Pressing on, and still discussing African fauna, the First whaler was overtaken by darkness just before the lights of Berbera appeared, and as a result of not being able to find the ill-indicated entrance to the harbour, spent the night cruising up and down until eventually at 0630 the boat sailed round the spit and into the sheltered waters of the harbour.

MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION

First Whaler	Second Whaler
S/Lt. DOWNIE	Lt. GRAHAM
O. A. MILLS	L/Sea. SPENDLOVE
A. B. RAY	L/Tel. CORRISS
O/Sea. YOUNG	A. B. MAYHEW
J/Sea. CASTLE	J/Sea. SINGH

J. M. C. G.



**PERCHING ORDERS FOR PARROTS
or
PROGRAMME FOR PESTS ON
PROBATION**

(With apologies to G.T.M. 141)

1. Parrots are to be in the Rig of the Day at all times, except when cook of the Mess, when lightweights or negative jumpers may be worn.
2. Duty Parrot will muster with cooks of messes at 0800. Parrot Mess spaces are to be scrubbed out and reported to Buff Parrot by 0900.
3. No Parrot is to leave his cage without requesting to the Parrot-at-Arms through Parrot owner.
4. No holes are to be pecked in cage surrounds or floors, as this filthy habit leaves the mess area in a disgusting state.
5. Parrots are to have their names clearly marked on ½ inch tape, 2½ inches in length, sewn neatly above the Port wing.
6. No Parrot is to share slinging billet with 'oppo' or owner.
7. The practice of using obscene language to members of the Ship's Company or General Public during open ship is to cease forthwith.
8. Failure to comply with the above regulations will result in disciplinary action being taken by the No. 1 Parrot.

Note

The following is an extract from Parrot Rules and Birds' Instructions (P.R. & B.I. No. 999).

Punishments

- No. 1 To be marooned on a desert island.
- No. 2 To be towed astern on a Balsa Raft.
- No. 3 Solitary confinement.
- No. 4 Stoppage of Seed.
- No. 5 Stoppage of Water.

N.B. No form of exercise is allowed with Nos. 2 & 3 punishments.

*By Command of their Featherbacks,
YE OLDE OOZLUM
(Senior Scratcher).*



THE "FRED" SAGA

Some people talk of the Nelson, the Rodney and the Renown,
Others speak of fictional frigates that always got them down,
But I have a wonderful story, and you are bound to bare your head,
As you gather around to listen to the "Tale of The Good Ship Fred."

'twas in May she was commissioned, the crew all gathered around,
As the Captain proudly informed us of the journey on which we were bound.
It seemed we were going to travel, to lands that were far away,
Which wasn't very popular with half of the crew on R.A.

We tested the guns and the engines and soon it was as plain as could be,
That if we got much more efficient they might make us go out to sea.
Sure enough that it just what happened and we all kept close to a boat,
As the "maties "flooded the dry dock, just to see if the Fred would float.

It seemed as if nothing would stop us, the time for our parting drew nigh,
So we all looked around for some defect to prevent us from saying goodbye.
We finished our working-up period and the leave that we all had to come,
Said " Goodbye "to our wives and our sweethearts, and left England looking quite glum.

The first part of our journey was across the mighty "Bay",
It brought us to Gibraltar, where we stayed just for the day.
Some of the men were tempted to stretch their legs and roam,
So a kind-hearted, thoughtful "chiefy " willingly drove them home.

So on through the Mediterranean, where the water's supposed to be blue,
Right up to the Eastern Gateway, where we wondered if we would get through.
They eventually decided to slip us through during the night,
In order that no one should see us and perhaps be alarmed at the sight.

We sailed way up the Persian Gulf to a place they call Bahrein,
Where we met another of our kind whose joy was clear and plain.
They gladly passed the "Flag " to us ; wished us luck where e'er we may roam,
Then gaily weighed their anchor and steamed off fast for home.

We had plenty of guns for a battle, and everything would have been fine,
If people had only left them alone and not tried to put them in line.
Always in harbour and sometimes at sea, a "Line-up " they wanted to try,
They "even aimed at" Celestial Objects hanging up high in the sky.

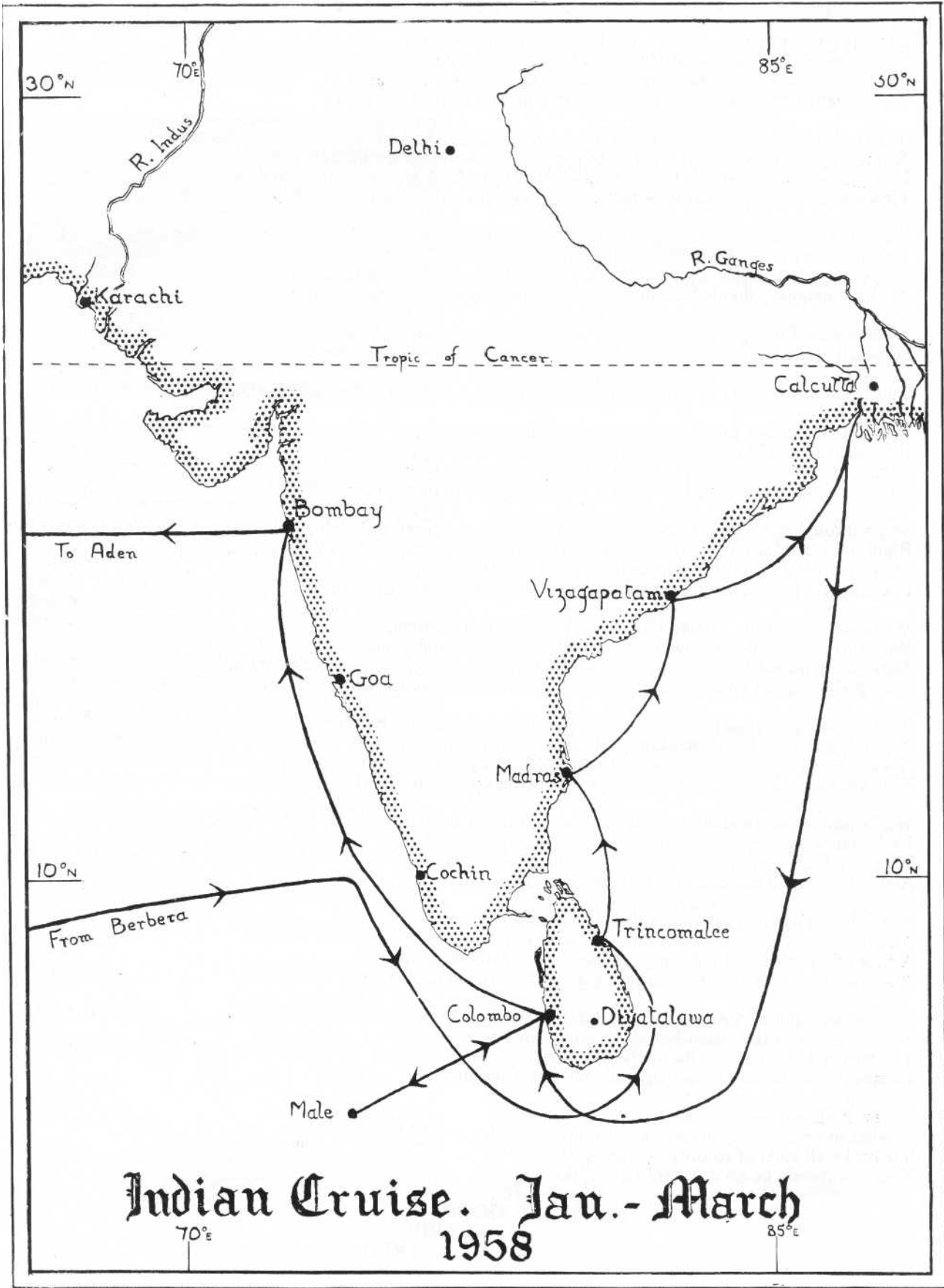
We formed up an amateur army in case we had trouble ashore,
Each man was given a weapon and webbing equipment galore.
They practised quelling a riot, against a villainous hoard,
And very soon all decided, it was better to stay aboard.

The Admiral's Inspection was a time I shall never forget,
And many there are that were in it, that have not recovered yet.
A time of painting and polishing, of frustration, panic and woe,
And the time to see the remarkable sight "Of everyone having a go.

The Persian Gulf and Aden, India and Trincomalee,
Are just a few of the places burned on my memory,
The mighty Indian ocean, the sweltering African coast,
I cannot quite remember which made me sweat the most.

At last it all was over and we finished off our trip,
In what to nearly everyone was a most amazing ship,
She broke all sorts of records, by magic it was said,
There can surely be no other ship quite like

THE
GOOD
SHIP
FRED.



Indian Cruise. Jan.-March
 1958

The Indian Cruise....

CEYLON

OUR first contact with the island of Ceylon came in January, at the beginning of the Spring Cruise. The ties between Great Britain and Ceylon have, in the past, been many and strong. Not least among these ties was the Royal Navy's connection with the island. For many years the naval link has been firmly attached to Trincomalee, but during our stay in the East Indies Station the last steps in breaking that link were under way. Ceylon has other plans for Trincomalee, though there seems to be some difference of opinion as to what these plans are.

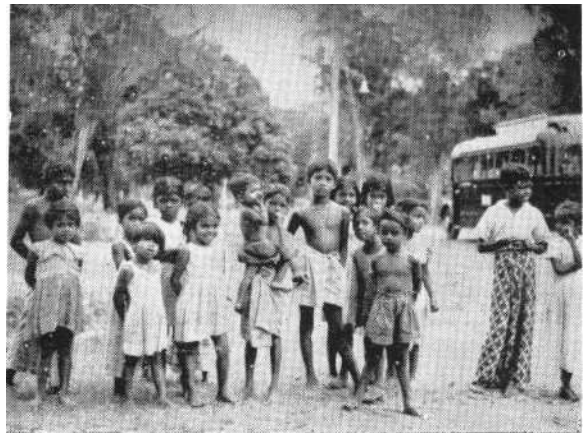
Situated on the N.E. coast of the island, Trinco is one of the world's largest natural harbours, capable, as some of our older readers will know, of holding a large number of ships. It has been given many nicknames and subjected to many comparisons, most of which are unprintable. One description does hold a true aspect, that is, "Scapa Flow in technicolour", for whatever may be lacking in bright lights and entertainment is to some extent overcome by nature's generosity with colour. It is indeed picturesque, but like any picture it loses a great deal of glamour when looked at too long from one angle. There is only one answer to such a problem, that is to go ashore and change the view.

After a long boat trip a landing is made at a jetty quite close to the town, though still within the confines of the dockyard. An abnormally high tide mark is the only reminder of the fierce storm which raged around this coast a few weeks earlier causing serious flooding and disrupting traffic and communications. An aftermath of the flooding, which caused some excitement locally, was that two elephants, evidently having upset tradition by forgetting the way home, finished up on Sober Island in the harbour. In spite of intense searching by bathing parties, no elephants were in fact discovered, although strong evidence of their occupation was found.

For those unwilling to expend a great deal of energy in the search for another view of Trincomalee, there is a taxi-service which operates from within the dockyard. Immediately upon leaving the dockyard there are plenty of rickshaws available, but if time and the mood permit, a walk will be likely to prove more fruitful. To those making their first visit, a walk will provide ample opportunity to view the many gems and precious stones displayed in the jewellers' windows.

Those to whom Trincomalee is no novelty, have no need to remain aloof from a walk, for there will be many comparisons to make. Many old landmarks will have disappeared and new ones will be in their place.

A few minutes walk takes you past the Methodist Church with its ever-open Manse door offering a welcome to all, past an assortment of boutiques selling an even greater assortment of goods, until finally the maidan is reached. This is a stretch of open common land, but even here there are signs of new development. A Town Hall and a sports arena are taking shape, but unfortunately, the local cattle do not appear to realise the gravity of such an operation as they continue to graze on what has been their land for so long. It was whispered in my ear that the former piece of development was suffering from a touch of financial embarrassment that rendered the building of a roof rather difficult.

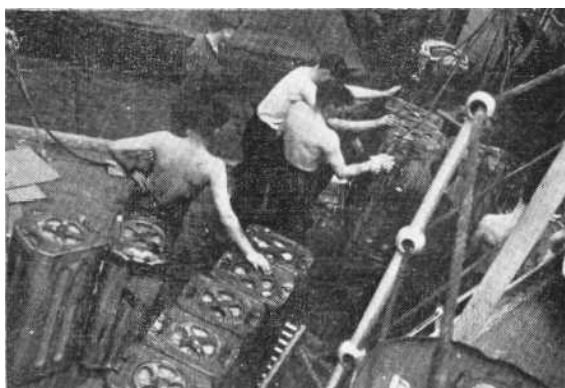


Ceylonese Children

Anyone hoping to escape from the sea for a while has no easy task in Trinco, the very shape of the town causes the sea to come into view at the most unexpected times. The prevailing monsoon creates, on the exposed beach, a picture postcard scene of booming surf which, in spite of its inviting appearance, can prove dangerous to bathers.

So it is with the sound of surf beating on the shore that one strolls past the Town Hall (pretending not to notice the two cows staring vacantly from the mayoral chambers) and the sports arena, heading towards another section of Trincomalee's shopping area. The approach to this area is, if the wind is right, marked by an increasingly strong odour of fish. It is no stroke of genius to discover that the large building to the right of the clock tower is a fish market, especially when the beach behind the building is well filled with local fishing dugouts and palm covered "haystacks" containing the nets and lines. Apart from an open market dealing mainly in fruit and vegetables, the only shopping is contained in one street and consists of the usual miscellany of wares ranging from jewellery to cycle repairs.

So much then for the commercial aspect of Trincomalee, but if you are still looking for something more pleasing there are others. Trinco can certainly boast of some fine beaches, and a pleasant time can be had strolling around the rocky headlands. In such places, the peaceful solitude is broken only by the birds and the sea itself as it pounds on the rocks. Sheltered rocky pools provide a home for many beautiful tropical fish and the rocks themselves often make a shelter for the crayfish which make such nice eating.



Ammunitioning-Ship

Trinco's dockyard area is rather unique in having some really pleasant wooded lanes within its confines, which provide pleasant walks for those interested. An advantage in walking around this district is that a well-timed walk can coincide with some sporting event as a rule, not to mention a pleasant refresher at the "Sportsman's Arms" or the Fleet Canteen. A walk around the dockyard roads soon shows how quickly the jungle reclaims its land when left unchecked. Creepers make their way across some of the roads and disused buildings are festooned with vines.

These then are some of the aspects of Trinco, and there are doubtless many more, but it does show that it is possible to find more than one view. Our initial visit to Trinco lasted little more than a week, but apart from the two leave parties that visited the rest camp at Diyatalawa, there were also some trips to places of interest such as Sigiriya and Anuradhapura, before we sailed for the next phase of Spring Cruise.

It was about a month later that we returned to Ceylon, this time our port of call was Colombo, where, after a short official visit, we entered dry-dock for routine inspection and cleaning.

Colombo, quite naturally, presented a very different picture, and even before we entered the harbour there could be no doubt as to the importance of the place, for along the approach

channel lay a queue of ships waiting to enter. Once inside the breakwater it could be seen that very little space was wasted as far as berthing was concerned. Going ashore, the landing was made at the new Municipal Port Building, an impressive affair, at least from the outside. A short walk out of the dock area was all that was needed to get into the principal shopping area, and here again were large numbers of jewellers' shops with display windows full of gems in beautiful settings. Colombo also boasts several department stores which stock a wide variety of goods. The city centre is quite compact and contains most of the government buildings and main shops within a small area. The streets provide a wide variety of characters, from uniform-conscious policemen to baggy-trousered Afghans who are generally money-lenders and render themselves most unpopular in their search for repayment.



Mount Lavinia

Shortly after entering the dry-dock there appeared a most amazing object which came to rest alongside the dock. Closer examination revealed that it was in fact a "Do-it-Yourself" galley, on wheels. Flaps were let down and flaps were raised, until finally it became a coal-fired galley such as had never been seen before. Quite apart from the harassing business of having to prepare food under the critical eye of the consumers, the galley staff also had to contend with temperamental fires that would have had an M.E. in tears. It is to their credit that they managed to provide for us so well during our stay.

Whilst at Colombo, two more leave parties went up to the rest camp and a trip up-country was made by the cricket team. Many people visited Mount Lavinia and other bathing beaches in the vicinity. Such pleasures as were found were overwhelmed by the inevitable discomforts of being in dry-dock. It was no bad reflection on Colombo that made us glad to say farewell, it was our relief from mosquitoes, flies and the trudge ashore for "Essential Services" !!!

R. A. S. F.



Leave at "Diyat"!



AT last the day of our much-heralded leave arrived, and we were on our way to the Leave Camp at Diyatalawa. What a welcome change the greenery of Trincomalee made in comparison with the arid deserts of Aden and the Persian Gulf area. This was to prove but a small sample of the scenes to come though.

Having started our journey whilst the day was still fresh, the five coaches fairly sped along the narrow roads, with the passing scenery rapidly changing. At times we might have been travelling through the English countryside, and then the scene would suddenly change to a tropical landscape with maybe a squalid village.

The first major stop en route was Kandy. The more adventurous of our party paid a visit to the famed Buddhist Temple of the Tooth, while the less inspired quenched their thirsts at the Queen's Hotel. The town, one of the largest in Ceylon, has several European buildings, white being the predominant colour, which gave an atmosphere of cleanliness to the whole place. A beautiful lake and the mountainous countryside beyond gave Kandy an air of serene calmness and beauty.



Buddha in Kandy Temple

On leaving Kandy the coaches clung to the winding mountainous road, and it was something of a spectacle that met our eyes. While large plantations could be seen nestling in the valleys, huge

cascading waterfalls thundered down the rock faces dropping hundreds of feet at a jump, and our cameras clicked continuously in an effort to catch this unforgettable picture.

On several occasions we took tea at rest houses, which appeared to be much of a likeness and part of the Ceylonese Government's drive to attract tourists.

The first impression when we finally arrived at Diyatalawa was typically pusser, and what better than the charming vocal chords of a Chief G. I.-

"Out of them buses you lucky lads ! "



The following morning, after an extended guard and steerage and a cup of tea in bed, it was learnt that for a mere packet of cigarettes the food supply became inexhaustible. On completion of breakfast the local golf course took on the appearance of a Giles' cartoon. The potential golfer had to contend with misguided missiles, straying cattle, or even a shower of cyclists gaily bedecked in dazzling shirts and safari hats. Whilst on the seventh tee Ding

Dong and Charlie provided light refreshments or the promise of other entertainment at a nominal fee !

The village of Diyatalawa defies description, one could pass the scattered huts without noticing them. However the local traders did some admirable business, judging by the number of loud shirts that were sported from the first morning.

Bandarawela on the other hand, some five or six miles from the camp, was somewhat larger and had one or two places of interest, an unfinished Catholic Church and a typical Buddhist Temple adjoining the village school.

The canteen seemed to be the centre of attraction on most evenings, where a game of whist or tombola was in full swing amidst the clink of Tiger bottles and a ceaseless murmur of voices in the background.

On boarding the coaches for the return journey, we realised that the camp had served its purpose to the full, giving us five refreshing days away from the

routine of life on board. So began the long downward journey.

At one stage hopes ran high that we might have to return to the camp, the road having crumbled due to the heavy rains the night before. After a short while however the road was cleared enough for us to pass, and we continued the downward journey to Kandy which lay at the foot of the mountains. There we exchanged greetings and advice with the second leave party, who were just beginning the upward climb, while several envious glances did not go unnoticed.

The final stretch of the journey was carried out at break-neck speeds, with the coach drivers skilfully negotiating the hairpin bends and frequently screeching to a halt in order to avoid a head-on collision. Our harrowing experiences were brought to an end when the grey form of the GAMBIA came into view through trees. As the buses slowed to a halt we all felt that it had been five days of well-away from it all !



"ON THE QUARTERDECK"

By the Prod

Place : Rosyth, September, 1957.

From C. in C. East Indies. To GAMBIA.

A Concert Party is a most welcome form of entertainment in the Persian Gulf. Can this be arranged ?

Place : Mediterranean Sea, October, 1957.

From GAMBIA. To C. in C. East Indies,

This is being done.



IT must be admitted that when the above reply was made, not a single soul amongst the motley throng which first appeared in response to the usual message in Daily Orders - "Anyone interested in forming a Concert Party muster in ... etc." - could possibly have imagined the quite remarkable success which "On the Quarterdeck" has achieved.

It has been said that the show has lots of talent, but to search for, find and bring out this talent was no mean task, and it will never be known quite how the first show in Basra ever managed to appear. The answer of course was team-work, a sure winner at any time. A countless number of ideas was conjured up, tried out and thrown away, but gradually some items showed promise. Songs, dances, sketches, musical turns and the Stooges, were sorted out and endlessly rehearsed almost every day during those first four weeks.

Thus was the show born. It showed promise, but alas, like any new baby, it wanted dressing. Materials were hastily bought in Gibraltar and Aden, and many willing hands started working to

produce costumes, props and the backdrop picture of the quarterdeck. The mountain of picked sisal being made into wigs in one office, (and fireproofed too) was a delight to see. The method of construction of a circular can-can skirt was only solved by higher mathematics.

The Royal Marines Orchestra now gradually came into the picture, and it is true to say that it has provided not only excellent music but has also added finesse and the professional touch to the whole show. Since the formation of the concert party, practically the whole of the music used has been suitably orchestrated, a painstaking task which has been much appreciated. As the "Show Band" on the stage, the dance band combination has been most impressive, proving itself a rare delight to many people who seldom, if ever, see such a large dance band.

Few changes from the original form of the show have been made, but much effort and constant repetition at rehearsal have undoubtedly added slickness and polish to many of the acts. Many people have remarked and have been not a little surprised that

there are no "blue" jokes in the show, but without being a prude, it is felt that a "clean" laugh has the merit of being enjoyed by everybody.



Our Compere and the "Three Stooges"

Many performances have been given to date, and many local charities have benefitted from the proceeds. Basra (2), Abadan, Aden (2), Karachi, Calcutta, Bombay (2), Dickoya and Trincomalee have all seen the show. The number of anecdotes and stories which could be told about each show is endless, as also is the number of additional grey hairs which some people now have, but all the time it has been a source of much pleasure and fun for all concerned - as concert parties always are.



The Can-can "Girls"

A great tribute must be paid to those who have worked so hard behind the scenes in coping with every possible form of difficulty, always at short notice. Switchboards long dis-used have been rebuilt, stages and curtains re-rigged or modified, and indeed, on one occasion, a complete stage had to be fabricated and built, with rehearsals going on in the middle of it. On two occasions we have had the good fortune to play in first-class theatres,

each seating about 1000 people. To be on stage in front of such an audience and to hear their laughter and applause is the thrill of a lifetime.

Perhaps the best recommendation the concert party could wish for is the fact that the Commander-in-Chief has been pleased to attend the show no less than five times, with many important personages as his guests.

Many more performances remain to be given during the East African cruise at places such as Dar-es-Salaam, Mauritius, Seychelles, Mombasa and, if we are fortunate, Nairobi. Did any show ever have such a tour? Throughout a long service career the producer has taken part in many concerts, pantomimes and "operas", but none could equal "On the Quarterdeck" for the fun and pleasure it has given to so many.

Thank you everybody, and Well Done.

"Anyone interested in forming a Concert Party muster ... etc."

Maybe you will have a go, next time ?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The following have contributed to the success and enjoyment of the show. ..

ON THE STAGE

Commander T. Orr
Lt. Cdr. I. R. Shaw
 Lt. Cdr. T. Wright
 Lt. P. R. Lees
 Lt. R. K. Arthur
Sub. Lt. R. J. Emerson
 Sub. Lt. P. Rudd
 Sub. Lt. G. Barr
 Midshipman P. Hodges
 Midshipman T. J. Hunt
Q.M.S.N. Overington
 M.A.A. I. K. Burge
 C.P.O. M(E). E. J. May
E.R.A. E. H. Bricknell
 E.R.A.P. Smith
O.A.P.T. Butland
C.P.O. J. Richardson
 E.R.A. P.W.E.G. Wright
R.E.A. R. Herdman
P.O. R.R.H. Osborne
 P.O. G. Tansley
P.O. Wtr. E. Crilley
 P.O. R.E.I. S.E. Bowles
 P.O.M. (E) A.F. Tuthill
Ldg. Sig. F. E. Eyre
 Ldg. Cdr. (Ed) A. O'Brien
 Mne. A. J. Pickwick
 A. B. T. P. Ryan
 A. B. R. Harberd
 Wtr. H. Codlin
 Wtr. J. Thomson
 A. B. M. Young
 A. B. R. Hargreaves
 M. (E) W. J. Dale
Ord. Sig. D. W. Smith

IN FRONT OF THE STAGE

Bandmaster A.D. Haig, L.R.A.M.
 Band Sgt. D. O'Connell
 Band Cpl. M. Hutton
 Musn. D. Clough
 Musn. K. Prince
 Musn. W. Hartland
 Musn. D. Macklin
 Musn. E. Kesterton
 Musn. K. White
 Musn. E. C. Gaze
 Musn. P. Westaway
 Musn. P. J. Hartell
 Musn. S. Horner
 Musn. R. S. Thomas
 Musn. I. Langford
 Musn. G. Dench
 Musn. D. Peerless
 Musn. T. Collier

BEHIND THE STAGE

Surg. Lt. M. Boyle
 Lt. C. Spurr
 Lt. P. G. Woodman
 Sub. Lt. Branegan
 Supt. Art. A. Lee
 E. R. A. D. Dick
 P.O.M.E. R. Martin
 L.R.E.M. B. Jones
E. M. R. H. Davidson
 E.M. M. E. Tuke

MADRAS

ON leaving Trincomalee for Madras on January 30th, there was a feeling of sadness in most of us, and certainly in the people based ashore there. This was the last time a British cruiser would be sailing out of Trinco harbour to the accompaniment of waves and cheers from British wives and families ashore. When we next arrived in these waters, the run down would be nearly complete, and most of the friends we had made ashore would be gone.

However, sadness was soon forgotten in the prospect of our first visit to an Indian port - for many of us the first time ever. Madras, the third largest city in India, pleasantly surprised most of us, I think, with its wide roads and bridges over the two rivers Coum and Adyar which flow through the city. After the filth and squalor of more romantic sounding places, the large buildings, general beauty and cleanliness were indeed refreshing.

It was here that "Rabbits" started to come aboard in ever-increasing numbers and you could almost hear them squeaking on the mess decks! This was certainly the first place we had visited where woodcarving, crocheted tablecloths, and curios of the kind that one might even expect ones wife to be pleased with, could be obtained. The Victoria Technical Institute, the official Government store, was visited by many, though the prices were a bit steeper there than at some of the smaller, less reputable places. One had to choose between



Sales on Deck

taking the chance of "being seen off" with inferior quality goods in the side streets, (S.I.O. has a beautiful cracked walnut jewel box!) or paying some 20% to 30% more at the Institute.

Bicycle rickshaws were another interesting feature of Madras, where taxis in the dockyard area were in rather short supply. When two well-known heavyweights took a ride in a rickshaw to the Institute one day, the Met. Officer had to get out and walk up hills of greater than 1 in 300, (and also past policemen, the practice of three up on a bicycle evidently being illegal!).

Sightseeing trips were organized to the Temple of the Seven Pagodas, (six of which were under the sea, and the other looked pretty decrepit!) which was some 30 miles south of the city. There was a very good beach for swimming after the sightseeing, and the drive itself was jolly interesting too.

VIZAGAPATAM

Vizag, spelt this way because it is almost impossible to spell the lengthy version correctly, is the site of the I. N. Boys' Training Establishment, I. N. S. Circars, which was the host ship and looked after us very well. They turned out a very smart guard and band to greet us on the jetty. (The sound of their band on the jetty, and our band on the quarterdeck, playing different tunes at the same time, brought back pleasant memories of the Boys' Brigade and Scouts on a Sunday morning at home!).

Vizagapatam is only a small town, but a port of growing importance. The harbour was created as an outlet for a large area of fertile country, with considerable mineral resources and no alternative access to the outside world. Sightseeing tours around the Caltex Oil Refinery and the Hindustani Shipyard were laid on for us, as were daily visits to Lawson's Beach, a large and beautiful stretch of sand, which is reputed to be the best in India. Bathing was very good, but as soon as we arrived on the beach we were immediately surrounded by local children, and others, who begged consistently the whole afternoon, and rather spoil the outing.

After leaving Vizag. for Calcutta we were diverted for a few hours to search two or three hundred thousand square miles of ocean (!) for a ship which sank in mysterious circumstances, somewhere in the area, possibly with insurance in mind. It seemed that the crew had come ashore with all their possessions, clothes, parrots, razors, cats, etc., but there had been, unfortunately, no time to collect the ship's log and other papers which had gone down with the ship! This will presumably become another mystery of the deep!

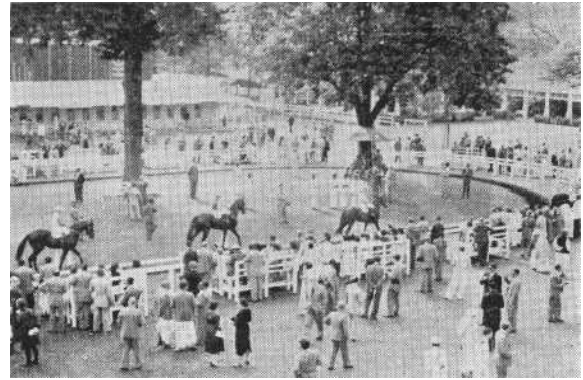
CALCUTTA

Calcutta, the Metropolis of India, will be remembered by many for the best ship's company dance they have ever been to. (Probably because there were more than enough girls to go around, and drink was "on the house" -always a good start to an evening's entertainment!)

There were two luxurious swimming pools, and sightseeing trips, official and unofficial, varying from visits to the Jain Temple, where colour photographers went crazy, to Firpo's Night Club (no comment!)



At the Races



For the so-called "dirtiest city on earth", Calcutta seemed relatively clean to most of us, compared with many ports we have been to, but we are quite prepared to admit that the Hooghly River is the dirtiest river on earth. Calcutta lies 90 miles up the Hooghly, and we were in the cleaner area, lying off Man-O-War Jetty, with open, park-like spaces in the background. This was the last cool weather we were to experience for a long time, and the misty evenings were reminiscent of London in October (at least to look at!).

Those of us who had saved our money and not bought at Madras certainly had the last laugh at Calcutta, where woodwork, bought in the famous New Market, was considerably cheaper than at Walnut Willie's in Madras.

Ah well- at least my jewel box hasn't cracked yet !

K.L.S.

Drink and forget your cares ;
Drink Tiger and forget everything.

"O Pleasant Isle of Male"

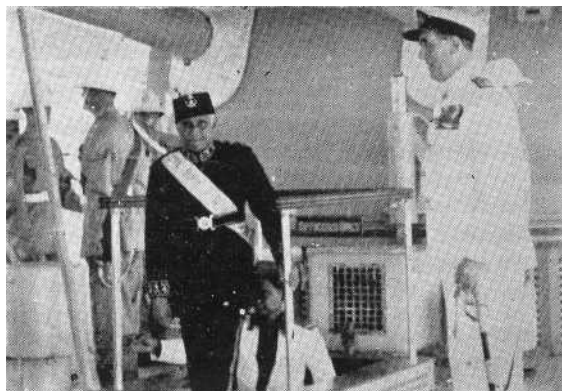
BEFORE we actually went to Male, there had been some conjecture in the ship as to where Male (pronounced as in Dietrich, but without the 'ne') actually was. Apart from the Fleet Operations Officer and the Navigating Officer, both of whom seemed convinced they knew, opinions varied from a place in South India to the Seychelles. But by the time we sailed, those in the know had converted the majority and we learnt we were off to a small island situated four degrees North of the Equator, in the centre, and the capital, of that long group of Islands called the Maldives. The actual purpose of our visit was to take the new High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Ceylon, His Excellency Mr. A. F. Morley, C.M.G., C.B.E., to pay his official calls on the Sultan and the Government of the Maldivian Islands.

The ship undocked during the forenoon of 3rd March, and what a relief it was to be afloat again and out of the steaming heat of Walker's Yard.

Then at 1530 the High Commissioner, accompanied by his wife and First Secretary, came on board, and at 1600 we sailed out of Colombo Harbour to the accompaniment of three rousing cheers from the Royal Ceylon Navy mustered on the breakwater.

The passage to Male took just over a day and a half, and duly at 0830 on Wednesday, we arrived at our anchorage and fired the National Salute, which was returned by a most impressive muzzle-loading battery in the old Portuguese Fort ashore. Then the High Commissioner and the Commander-in-Chief went ashore to pay their calls. They were given a very friendly reception by the Maldivians, who had decorated the large arch leading into the courtyard in front of the Sultan's Palace, with a huge 'Welcome' sign, and all the children from the schools had turned out to wave British and Maldivian flags and cheer them on their way. After they had returned to the ship, His Highness the

Sultan came on board for the return call. It was a most impressive sight to see him, in his splendid blue and gold uniform, being rowed off in his State Barge. This barge was presented to him by Queen Victoria in 1897, and his oarsmen would have done credit to many of the Captains' Gigs' crews of old. He was received on board with full ceremonial, Guard and Band playing the Maldivian National Anthem, or what we are told is the National Anthem, for to most ears it sounded uncommonly like 'Auld Lang Syne.'



The Sultan

In the afternoon, of course, there was leave, and many took the opportunity to look round Male. Truly an amazing island, it is oval in shape, about two miles long and a mile wide. Two long streets run the length of the island with others crossing them at right angles, and apart from them there was virtually no open space on the island, as every available square inch of land is used for building houses on. Round every house is a high wall, built, so it is said, to stop the womenfolk of the island, who remain closeted in their houses all day long, being seen by men. If this is their object, then undoubtedly they are successful as, apart from the occasional head peeping over them or a glimpse of the sly pulling aside of a curtain in one of the latticed windows, it would be hard to believe that there are any women at all on the island - perhaps that's how it got its name. There are few shops and little in them to buy except stamps. These are quite rare, especially when postmarked "Maldiv Islands", and the Post Office did a roaring trade, in fact, at times, it would have been swamped if some of its customers had not enlisted themselves into Government Service and helped behind the counter.

But I should think the main impression that the island of Male leaves on all its visitors is one of the quite spotless cleanliness of the whole place. The white-washed walls, the burnished brass fittings on the houses, the coral-sanded roads, everything gleamed in the sun, and the inhabitants in their Persil-white suits with their hair sleeked back with coconut oil, could all have appeared on any advertisement for Brylcreem.



The Sultan's Barge

Later on, on that first afternoon, the Ist XI played Male at Soccer, and following the match the Royal Marines gave a performance of Beat Retreat. Perhaps the speed of the local side, on that first occasion, surprised our team, for we lost 3-1. However, the team had their revenge on Saturday, when they outclassed the Maldivians and won 8-1.

And what was there for those who did not go sightseeing or watch the football? Well, the smaller islands surrounding the main island looked inviting enough and, although we were warned that swimming in the deep water inside the lagoons was dangerous due to sharks, we were told that inside the coral reefs, where the water was shallow, it should be quite safe. The nearest island, just



over half a mile from the ship, had a most attractive beach, so on the first day a bathing party went off to explore, and their reports were so enthusiastic that the island was converted into a swimming resort for the remainder of the visit. Within 24 hours, the Canteen had sold out of swimming masks, goggles, and flippers. And how right those first reports had been. From the waving palms on the edge of the beach, white sand led into the clear, blue water of the tropical sea. In the sea around the edge of the coral reef, where the depth dropped almost vertically from 10 feet to 10 fathoms, a complete new world opened up - a world of coral cities inhabited by myriads of fish of every conceivable colour, some even every colour of the rainbow. One could lie in the water and