

land-dwellers a chance to recuperate. On exercises we pretend we are cruisers or aircraft-carriers, and shoot at one another.

Do you hit anyone?

Not very often.

What else do you do?

We have evolutions. These are the really important exercises and can make or break a man's career in the Navy. The sort of thing you do (if you really have to) is to climb the mast and fry an egg with one hand while you play

"Annie Laurie" on a mouth organ with the other. It's good for character.

It also shows something or other, although I'm not quite sure what.

How long do you stay at sea?

That depends on three things : (a) the length of the journey; (b) whether or not the Captain gets seasick; and (c) how much damage we did at our last port of call. It gets less and less as time goes by; sailors haven't the stamina they used to have - or so three-badgemen have led me to believe. Many years ago, eighty or ninety days was commonplace, but to-day we start boasting about how long it is since we last saw land after nine or ten days at sea.

How do you pass your time on long voyages?"

We have all sorts of hobbies to while away the long hours. If you are an important man like the Skipper, you organise gunnery exercises; if you are just a sailor, you have smaller pleasures such as painting bulkheads (walls), scrubbing decks (floors) or pulling whalers around and turning them inside out.



- and also were inspected

Is that all you do?

Oh no ! Sometimes we organise high-speed trials. The object is not to see how fast we can go (we know that already) but to wash the paint off the ship's side to give the boys something to occupy themselves with when we are in harbour. Then we have all kinds of interesting community games like " Hands to Action Stations " or "Atomic Attack." My favourite is called " Darken Ship " when someone puts out all the lights on the upper deck without warning to see how many men can get below without falling overboard. Everyone has a good time on that one.

It sounds a very restful life. Don't you ever work?

Yes. They cater for physical alertness as well as mental in the modern Navy. Every Saturday we have Rounds. This is the day we clean out our Mess for the Captain to glance at and make suggestions for improving our personal comfort. There are all kinds of Rounds nowadays and new ones are still being invented.

Is a ship very comfortable to live in at sea?

GAMBIA comfortable? But definitely. It would be a very dreary life if after a hectic day we had nowhere to relax. We have our own swimming pool which holds at least five men at a time. This is rigged (put up) on the fo'c'sle (the pointed end) and if there is no pool at odd times, we have plenty of sun-decks on which we can lounge around getting bronzy-bronzy for leave.

It must be a wonderful life?

Oh, it is, it is ! Sometimes we are really sorry to be going into harbour.

I can well believe it. You would urge any young man to join the Navy, then?

Without a doubt.

What sort of work do you personally do?

Me? Oh, I'm a National Serviceman : along for the cruise, you know.

M.S.H.





Christmas  
Fare



New Year  
Draught

## Cocktails for Seven Months

Robert Sperling, Esq., came onboard for a Cocktail Party at Mombasa. His brother, Colonel Sperling, had joined us for the passage from Gib. and with true fraternal solicitude persuaded Bobby that a quiet period in H.M.S. GAMBIA was the ideal recuperative course for the work-weary Kenya farmer. Bobby wasn't easily persuaded, but towards the end of the party he began to see life at sea in a rather different light and eventually decided that perhaps he could spare himself from the farm for the fortnight.

A man of action he. Having concluded that a short holiday was his due, he flew to Nairobi to collect his toothbrush and to brief the farm manager. This he somehow managed to do at a pyjama party-no mean feat as the manager wasn't there and Bobby would no more dream of acquiring a toothbrush provided by a thoughtful hostess than of appearing out of the rig of the day.

It must have been a good party as we saw no more of Bobby until he arrived at Dar-es-Salaam just too late to catch the plane to Zanzibar, which had been arranged for him at great expense and no little trouble. But Bobby was philosophic : a trip to Zanzibar is just another visit, but a pyjama party is a pyjama party.

Bobby enjoyed his time at Dar and in the Seychelles, where he was slightly foxed by the coconuts: " Nothing like 'em in Kenya actually." En route for Karachi the Wardroom dined him out. Bobby said how sorry he was to be leaving on arrival : " But farms don't take care of themselves; all good things come to an end, one mustn't overdo it. . . ." It was pretty plain that he was about as keen to get back to the Mau Mau as we were to join the Fishery Protection Squadron. And amazingly enough at Karachi, planes were always fully booked when Bobby enquired - usually half an hour before take-off. And the ships went by such devious routes that one might as well go via Hong Kong. And that's how Suzie Wong came to hear about Karachi Crap.

Karachi Crap is a vicious dice game invented by Bobby to while away that boring half-hour between breakfast and tot-time. But before he could introduce its excitement to the ladies of Kowloon he had a little mundane sea-time to put in. He drew up morning rounds to coincide with the time the tea was wet: 0945, Chippies' Shop; 0955, Fo'c'sle Locker; 1005, Buffer's Caboosh, etc.

But he also turned his hand to everything; no keener scrubber of the quarter-deck, no supporter was more ardent at the Regatta, no sturdier pole-putter-up-er in Mauritius. It was here that Bobby brought over a message from our French friends. He had been liaising with his opposite number (the Padre) in the Jeanne d'Arc. The message read : " We have the trouble with the telephone to Curepipe. Have you the Talkie-Walkie onboard please? " The reply was drafted in the Gunnery Office, and was too verbose for the French to follow, but on the strength of taking it over, Bobby soaked our gallant allies for another half-litre of Pernod.

And so to Wanchai. Even at this stage, Bobby still agitated for a signal to be sent demanding a visit to Geisha Land, " so that we can all have a proper bath, actually." But Japan was not to be, and Bobby had to content himself with putting " Belfast - or 3rd F.S. - compassionate " on his Drafting Preference Card.

Not for fear of libel action, but purely out of kindness, we shall draw the veil of charity over Hong Kong and Singapore. Not since the days of Fu Manchu has

East met West to such mutual advantage. And even to-day, walk into Bobby's cabin, whisper " Ding Dong. Darling," and he's over the gangway quicker than the Buffer can say " Up all chinstays."

Bobby volunteered to fly ahead as Liaison Officer to Durban, where at last he had to leave us. But when he heard that the Uckers Competition was to be held on passage, he withdrew his request. The Wardroom didn't dine him out again, but he delayed tea-boat rounds by an hour or two so that they coincided with the Grog Call, and he made his farewells in the best of spirits.

But alas, Bobby was unable to make his getaway at Durban, nor even at Port Elizabeth. This was due to a multiplicity of factors beyond his control, such as Commando Brandy, the Hi Diddle Diddle Girls, and a fascination for Snake Parks.

There are those who insist that Bobby was with us at Cape Town; another school is equally adamant that he took a spell of Station Leave between P.E. and Luderitz. Since by this time the Keyboard Sentry had been abolished, and the Q.M. frequently had to leave the gangway to check on the monkeys, there is no reliable evidence either way. Bobby admits to being slightly hazy about this period, but then who isn't?

Pursuing our Gunboat Diplomacy up the West Coast offered no incident of note, other than Bobby's once putting on a tie before noon. This was on the occasion of the Trophy Parade at Bathurst. This martyrdom received no applause from the shoreside people, but naturally they didn't appreciate the sacrifice of a tradition as sacrosanct as drinking Bubby from an unwashed glass.

The Rock, stepping-stone to Pompey. But Bobby wasted little time feeding the apes. In Algeiras glittered the attractions of the bullfight, and at a price of twenty minutes' extra sea-time El Sperling was in the thick of the blood and sand, flaying the matadors with crisp Andalusian phrases, with a Kenya accent. After the third bottle of vino (the second had mostly been soaked up by his shirt and the sombrero of the peasant in front of him) Bobby's ire turned on the bull : " So tame I wouldn't have him on the farm; could kill him with a fan and a paper-knife, riding a clothes horse; let's show 'em how it's done; viva la Guardia Civil ! " But Dominguin's rival was gently restrained by his messmates, who took it in turn to sit on him. Not until the midnight ferry were we shown how it should be done, slightly to the consternation of the other passengers, many of whom were requested to move to seats in the shade (i.e., away from the bar). As not to do so would be to invite a drenching in fundador, all complied.

Bobby took first leave at Pompey and I watched him go down the gangway, the delicate stalactite presented by friends sharing his interest in nature study, clasped in his hand. And as he disappeared down the quay, gently bellowing " Mac the Knife," I reflected that we had enjoyed Mombasa. Yes, it had been a good party.

M.O.B.

## Forgetting the Diver

The job was to dig a trench in reinforced concrete using pneumatic tools at a depth of sixty feet. I was the only diver down that day and already I had twice allowed too much air from the jack hammer to collect under my waist and chest, with the result that I found myself performing acrobatics over the drill. But this was merely routine hazard; the day's work had hardly begun !

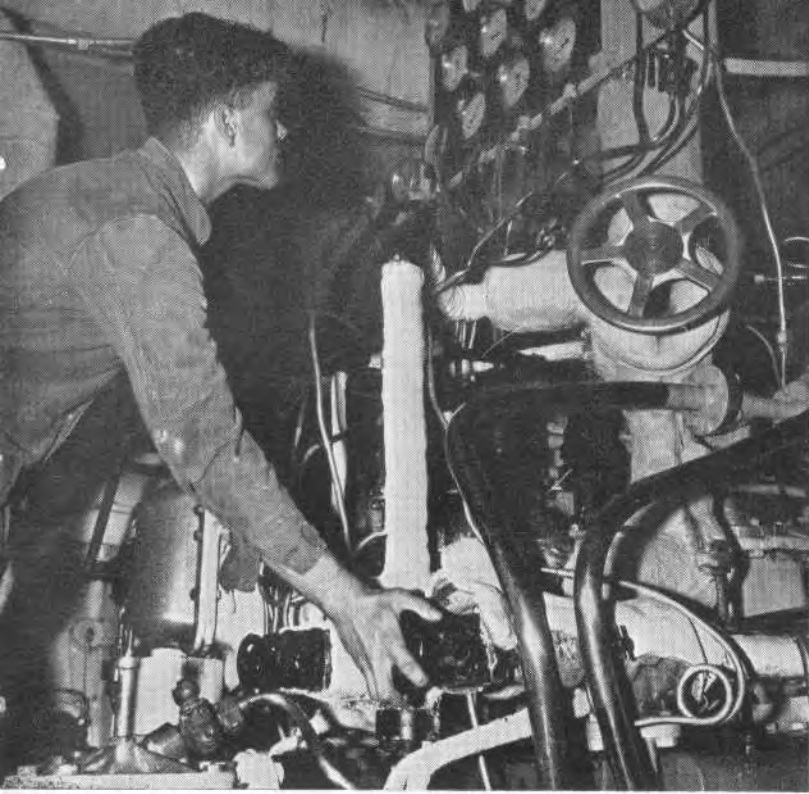
Time and again I had warned my linesman that if his diver is down and cannot be felt to be moving about below, he should be signalled to ensure that he is still safe and interested. So periodically I expected one bell, in which case I would reply to let him know I hadn't expired - no comments ! However, when I'd been working for almost an hour I was prompted to have a rest, so I moved some rocks and sat down in the trench with my thoughts for my company. Sometimes when I think, I reach a conclusion; and now it suddenly dawned on me that I hadn't had any signals from my linesman for quite some time. Maybe he'd died on the job? I signalled frantically : one bell on the lifeline. No reply. I signalled again - twice, and still didn't get an answer. By now I had regained my head and I decided to give my partner a fright, so I gently pulled on my line and coiled in, securing to my waist as it paid out from the boat above.

Up to this time my air supply had been all right and I had been aware of the regular chugging of the compressor motor. Suddenly I felt and heard my air supply cut off - completely; and as I had my lifeline coiled up and secured to my belt I signalled hurriedly now on my air pipe. No answer. I signalled twice again - still no reply; and by then my imagination feared the worst. I quickly closed my outlet valve to conserve the air in my suit, knowing I didn't have enough left to blow up to the surface. I didn't feel yet that the situation warranted slipping my weights, so I made a frantic bid out of the trench, feeling my way in complete blackness along a suction pipe to my shot rope and hauled myself hand over hand laboriously to the surface, where I managed to reach a line across to the ladder on a nearby pile. I clambered on top and had my face-piece almost unscrewed before some warm-hearted mother's son remembered the old ITMA adage and suddenly turned my air supply ON (believe me, I needed `gulpers ' by then).

A reconstruction of events as there would have been had a post-mortem been necessary (my only consolation being that I wouldn't have had to attend the court-martial !) revealed the following facts :-

I was able to remove my own lifeline simply because my linesman was reliving his previous night's prowess at cards, and doubtlessly rolling himself a well-earned tickler, too - with my tobacco ! On this job I was the only diver down, but reinforcements arrived while I was on the bottom and a second diver having been dressed, the routine of blowing condensation out of his helmet and air pipe was carried out before screwing down. The pipe alongside my own was connected for this test and turned on. Instead of turning that particular tap off thereafter, the linesman latched on to mine, closing my air supply. It was only when he saw me frantically clambering off the ladder that he realised his mistake and retuned my supply. The ensuing strip which was torn off, I will not recount. It's enough to remark on the sweetness of that longed-for air which makes the best of elements to drink - though I don't much mind a drop of sediment in free beer. Linesman . . . . ! !

A.H.



I'm driving !



A good loaf !

*Grease Paint  
and  
Footlights*

" Christmas away from home - we shall need a concert party." How easy it all sounded and with eager hearts we made our plans. A stage was rigged in the cinema (Chippy needed SOMEWHERE to stack his timber) and we set to work with

auditions, new scripts, old scripts, rewritten scripts, rehearsals . . . We were making fair progress, apart from the odd case of cold-feet and artistic temperament and the usual difficulty of getting all the cast together in one place at one time, when we heard details of the entertainment arranged ashore for us in Mombasa, Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam. Grave doubts assailed us. Would we be too busy rehearsing to take part? Would we have an audience to play to? Perhaps we should postpone it?

On the way to Karachi our interest was rekindled by invitations to stage cabarets at three local clubs, and we began again. The conjuror practised his tricks and polished his patter; the St. Trinian girls were fitted with costumes and assembled an impressive array of weapons; the singers and the mimers rehearsed and rehearsed again. A new fever inspired us. Our first night was made difficult by poor lighting and an enormous space between the audience and the players. But we were well received and we went on with confidence to the next club. Here facilities were better but the audience less responsive. For our final performance conditions were good but we forgot our lines and gave wrong cues and felt deflated.

But we had learned a great deal and had achieved the nucleus of our own show onboard : the cabaret acts, the odd sketch (VERY odd at times), a home-made calypso and the inevitable choruses made up the programme. Three performances were given to packed and delighted houses, and as the applause and laughter echoed in our ears it all seemed worthwhile - well almost!





# 007 Triumphs Again

A Short Play definitely not by lxn Flxmxng

## CHARACTERS

007 (James Blond)  
Head of Smersh - - Col. Kromesky  
Flag Lt. - - - Bugarov  
Staff Assassins - Ivan, Nikita and Fred  
Beautiful Spy - - - Titania

SCENE 1: Office of Head of Smersh, an austere room with desk, filing cabinets, etc. Col. Kromesky is walking up and down, muttering.

Kromesky : " Where the hell's that Flag Lieutenant? "

(Flag Lt. enters)

"Ah ! Bugarov ! "

Flag Lt. : "Ay, Ay, Sir." (Exits again)

Kromesky : " Come back you fool - I want to discuss plans to get rid of James Blond, that accursed British spy. Summon the staff assassins."

(Enter three men in cloaks and dark hats, together with Titania who undulates after them)

Kromesky : " Greetings, comrades. To-night we must strike a blow for Smersh."

(All stand to attention and salute)

" The Englishman Blond has been a thorn in our side for too long. But now it is time for him to be eliminated. We must not fail. Who wishes to volunteer?"

Ivan (pushed forward by others) : " Sir comrade - comrade sir - let me be one.I have invented a new kind of bomb - one that is sensitive to genuine Scotch whisky - the brand he always drinks. Put under his chair when he comes in for his normal nightly noggin, it cannot fail."

Nikita : " Nein ! Nein ! Nein ! Thiss too clumsy iss-and vat a vaste of good visky. I a better plan haf. I will sprinkle the itching powder down his back and this will make him Wriggle. Then he will begin to squirm and to jump up and down. Then-poof-the air-cooled sawn-off submachine-gun which he always wears under his arm will go off and send a bullet through his heart-and the whole world will be stunned by the fiendish cunning of Smersh."

(All stand to attention and salute)

Fred : " Pah ! All these methods only exterminate the man himself. I have a plan that will not only kill him but will also disgrace him and bring discredit on his organisation. Titania here will seduce him and while he is held in her arms we Will take a film of all the proceedings."

Flags : " Yes. Yes, and we can release it with an X certificate so that even the Wardroom will want to see it."

Fred : " Before his passion is spent I will creep up behind him and smother him so that he suffocates. The world will think he died of exhaustion and we shall have demonstrated that our beautiful Russian girls are far beyond the capacity of these Western milksops."

Kromesky : " Enough, my friends - we will all go to his hotel and play it off the cuff."

(Curtain)

J.B. attired but with bulge under left armpit, saunters in - he pours himself a whisky and sits by the table. As he dozes elegantly in his chair, the door opens and in comes 1st Ass., carrying the bomb. He is still dressed in cloak and hat. A slight noise causes J.B. to whip round, hand inside jacket. He relaxes as he sees the quaint figure.

J.B. : " Hello, old boy-pour yourself a drink."

J.B. tosses over the bottle of whisky. There is an explosion, then darkness. Lights on again to show J.B. dishevelled on the floor. There is no trace of Ivan except for cloak and hat.

J.B. : " Well, blow me down, that whisky must be stronger than I thought ! "

He picks himself up, settles down again in his chair and falls asleep - after removing gun from holster and sticking it into his braces. The 2nd Ass. creeps into the room with a large packet of powder which he sprinkles over J.B., Who at once begins to twitch and wriggle. Suddenly a bang and 2nd Ass. rushes out holding his backside and yelling " !xx!xx! " J.B. simmers down, looks thoughtfully at his gun and puts it back in holster.

Enter hip-swaying seductive Titania who minces over to J.B. and strokes his face.

J.B. : " Well, hello, you gorgeous creature. Lie down and let me talk to you. What's your name? "

Titania . " Handsome Englishman finds Titania alluring? Si? "

J.B. : " See? What can you show me? - I hope ! "

He dashes over to the door and hands a DO NOT DISTURB notice on the knob out on the inside of the door. He returns and sits on Titania's lap.

Titania : "You are so slim, Jim."

The door flies open to reveal Kromesky, gun in hand, Flags, and the three Assassins, one with a large bandage over his trousers.

J.B. : " Hell's bells - Smersh ! "

They all salute and Titania springs to attention, dropping J.B. on the floor.

Kromesky : " You are right, Mister Blond, and at last we have you in our power. Soon you will die, but first let us see what you carry in that case."

(Flags opens the case)

Flags: "Ah ! Vodka!"

He pours out large tots and hands them around - including J.B.

Kromesky (clicking his heels) : " To Smersh." (They all drink)

J.B. : " Smersh." (They all drink)

They begin to stagger and one or two slip gracefully to the floor.

Titania : " Shhhhhhhmersh." (They all drink. More collapse)

J.B. : " Shhhhhhhmerrrrrrrsssssshhhh."

J.B. falls on Col. Kromesky and they both fall down.

Kromesky : " Shhhh . . . ."

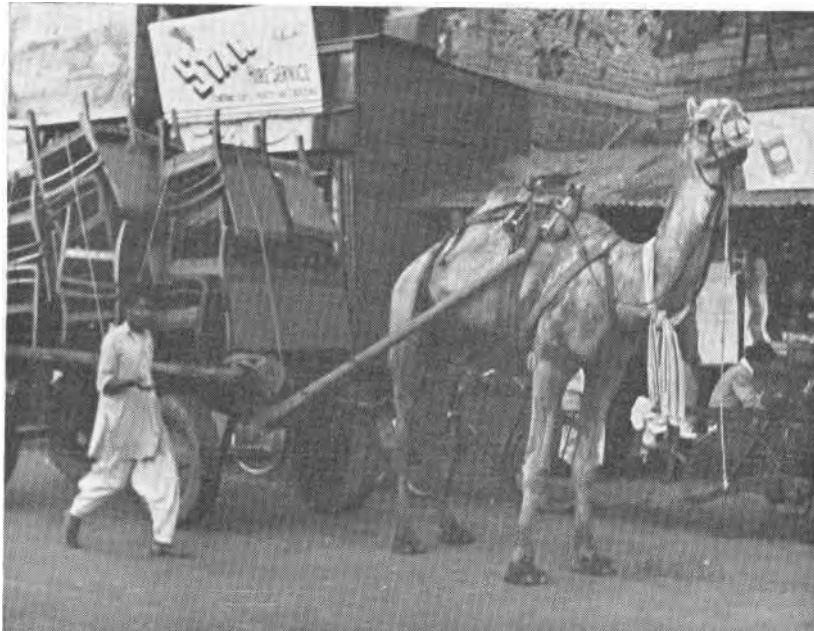
They are all out cold. J.B. rises and staggers towards the door, dragging Titania with him. Faces his visitors for the last time and salutes.

"Hic!"

(Curtain)



A winner's crew



Karachi Hump

## Swinging the Lead

You see, doc, it all started when I was a kid - on my holidays in Blackpool. There I was, scarcely knee-high, strolling down the prom. with my mum and dad, when I saw these pencils on a beach-stall. No ordinary pencils. These were PENCILS. Bigger'n a stick of rock, they were. I kinda took a fancy to 'em and asked my mum if I could have one. She'd only just before bought me a stick of rock and she said " No," so I started bawling. In the middle of the pavement. Gathered quite a crowd it did, y'know, thing like that did just after the war, and of course, I got my pencil. The next time I remember anything like it was when I was about eleven or twelve. First form high school it was, and I had a can't remember gaining it, it was just there in my possession. Beautiful pencil it was. A thick lead graphite one. I was real proud of it. When I saw all my school-chums writing with ordinary ones I used to see red. " Sacrilege " I thought. Whenever I got hold of one I used to break it. It sorta satisfied me. But it didn't stop there. I found myself using the dinner-times to go round everybody's desks breaking any pencils I found. I got caught quite a few times. Punched a few heads and got mine punched now and again, and even went before the headmaster a couple of times. But it didn't stop me. What stopped me was when I found a bloke using my lead graphite pencil to do a hundred lines with. When I told him to hand it over he snapped it in two and gave me half. Did you get that, doc? He snapped it in two. My pride and joy. Snapped. Just like that. 'Course, I pushed his face in and got expelled. I had to join the Navy to save my face. In an attempt to reform myself I took a job that would keep me in almost daily contact with pencils. Radar plotting. It was fabulous. In training, that is. I used to spend all day with a pencil in my hand, leaning over a table drawing lines and writing upside down. Really nice time I had. Anyway, I got drafted to this ship see, that used chinagraph pencils on perspex for plotting, and I didn't like it at all. I used to try and dodge it whenever it was my turn to go behind the plot. But I had the other job, see doc. Special Sea Dutyman. Whenever we entered or left harbour I had to go on the bridge and write down all the orders passed to the wheelhouse. I enjoyed it. And I used to save pencils, see. Every time I went on the bridge I was issued with a pencil and I never returned it. I bet I had the greatest collection of pencils anywhere. H.B.s, Forty -eight-seventy -eights, Forty-eight-fifty-tuos. Any type. You name it - I had it. Or should I say, I've got it. You see, doc, I lost this job, and my whole interest in the Navy waned. I had some money in the bank so I bought myself out and got a job in a pencil factory. Where else? I was so good in this pencil factory that I earned promotion after promotion. I was born for the job, see. But anyhow, I caught the eyes of so many bosses with my work that I ended up in an office. I used to sit in this office thinking of all those pencils being made on the other side of the wall, and I used to be on edge. It nearly drove me crazy, so I had to do something about it, didn't I? I started taking the pencils home, and I used to sit at home holding 'em by the hour. Different pencils every night, see doc, and I couldn't bring myself to throw the old ones away. That's my problem, see doc, 'though why you'd be interested puzzles me. You see, when I heard the dustbin-man outside yesterday, I went out to see him and asked him if, while I'm out of town next week, he'd go in my house, I told him where the key was, and remove all my pencils Y'see, I figured that it wouldn't be such a shock to me if I came home to a house with no pencils, than if I were there when they were taken away. Anyway, they referred me to the council and this morning I told them about my houseful of pencils and asked if they could help with the disposal arrangements. And here I am, where they sent me. Say, there's nothing wrong with me, is there, doc?

M.W.



A few  
choice  
rounds-



- were fired from time to time.

# Sports Round-Up

The first three months of the commission were rather busy ones and there was little opportunity for trials and proper selection of the various teams, but eventually we were able to field soccer, rugby, hockey, boxing, water polo, squash, golf, basket-ball and, later, tennis and cricket teams.

It was in February that we had our first major sporting fixture when, away from the wintry gusts at home, we met up with the BIRMINGHAM in Gibraltar and engaged in an Olympiad including squash, tennis, hockey, soccer, shooting, a Round the Rock relay race, basket-ball and various indoor sports. The result showed that the GLAM GAM was living well up to her reputation in being a good sporting ship, winning eleven events, drawing one and losing only five.

This was followed by a pulling and sailing regatta in Sicily in early summer, and the Mediterranean Fleet swimming gala at Malta; in the latter event we came an overall third (shore stations included) and first in the sea-going ships.

There was a slight lull in sporting activities for the next few months, more trials being held and a well-earned rest enjoyed. During our third visit to Gibraltar in September (a stay prolonged by some small electrical trouble !) an interpart soccer competition was held in which many septic knees were gained, while tennis, squash and hockey were not forgotten.

Save for Greece which proved rather chilly, the rest of the cruise was made in relatively warmer conditions, though cricket seems to have been indulged in only very infrequently; even in tropical conditions the games played most were soccer, rugby and hockey - which in temperatures of 80° plus were guaranteed just a little uncomfortable, and instead of sucking oranges at half-time it was a case of swallowing salt tablets by the dozen. It's cheaper that way !

The Seychelles provided some amusement in that we played the local rugger team on what, twenty-four hours previously, seemed a presentable pitch; it was unfortunate that it rained rather heavily and inconveniently flooding the pitch somewhat (up to four inches in parts) so at the end of the game when the players were mustered everyone was vastly relieved to find not one had been drowned.

Whilst the ship lay alongside at Karachi it was decided to hold an interpart athletics meeting; it seemed a good place to hold it with a three-week stay and beer at eight shillings a bottle. So it was arranged and P.N.S. Himalaya kindly lent us their sports field for our last week-end in Karachi.

Owing to the large numbers of entrants for individual events (they had been successfully pushed or dragged into doing something athletic) heats were held on the Saturday in order to bring down the number of qualifiers to six for each event.

The finals began on Sunday at 1445, and field and track events kept well to schedule though some of the longer races must have been most trying in the dry heat of the afternoon. The Electrical Department clinched their claim to the interpart Huddersfield Cup by winning both relay races outright.

Mr. Sperling, who took an intense interest in all the events, presented a watch to the Victor Ludorum, for which three people tied with ten points each. The watch went for the afternoon's best individual effort and the prizes were presented by the Captain.

Of all the places visited, Durban will be most remembered, certainly as a sporting paradise as far as the soccer team was concerned; and perhaps a few