

on a gigantic barbecue. This consisted of several whole sheep wrapped in cabbage leaves, which had been cooking in a pit since 4 a.m. The resultant roast mutton, which had a taste all of its own, was dispensed by a team of islanders from behind trestle tables, the popular method of carving being to seize a leg in one hand, brandish a large knife in the other, and hack !

By tea-time the visit was over and the Duke of Edinburgh returned on board. We weighed at 4.20 p.m. and sailed with *Hawea* and *Pukaki* in company. Once clear of the bay, they steamed past and cheered ship and set off to meet *Endeavour* and escort her part of the way south, while we turned south-east for our 4,000 mile passage to Graham Land.



## H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh's Cruise

### PART II. - THE VOYAGE TO ANTARCTICA AND THE ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

#### ITINERARY

ARRIVE		PLACE	DEPART	DISTANCE
		WAITANGI, CHATHAM ISLAND.	1630 19th December	—
1100	3rd January ..	DECEPTION ISLAND	1100 4th January ..	4,717
0900	7th January ..	PORT STANLEY (EAST FALKLAND).	2130 8th January ..	779
0930	9th January ..	FOX BAY (WEST FALKLAND).	1530 9th January ..	146
0900	12th January ..	SOUTH GEORGIA ..	1730 12th January ..	933
1500	16th January ..	GOUGH ISLAND ..	1800 16th January ..	1,470
0930	17th January ..	TRISTAN DA CUNHA	2030 17th January ..	235
0800	22nd January	ST. HELENA ..	2300 22nd January	1,510
1000	25th January ..	ASCENSION ISLAND	1630 25th January ..	702
0930	29th January ..	BATHURST ..	2300 31st January ..	1,425
0900	6th February ..	GIBRALTAR ..	—	1,779
				13,696

The second part of this cruise was to prove even more remarkable than the first.

On the first day out from Chatham Island we crossed the Date Line and so had our second 19th December. The Commander, on whose birthday we arrived at Port Waitangi, found that he had a second birthday to celebrate and could not be sure whether he was two years older as a consequence or not.

We were now well and truly into the Roaring Forties, our course taking us to the east and slightly south into the Roaring Fifties. We were all prepared for south-west gales, mountainous seas and driving rain. We looked out our oilskins and seaboots, lashed the suitcases to the tops of the lockers and waited with a towel handy to go round the neck. We waited for the call to secure a piece of equipment which had broken loose, to secure it in driving green water and on a wildly heaving deck we waited with some apprehension to oil at sea in conditions where the hose lashes like a wild thing, where ropes

are wet and raw to the hands and the spray falls with monotonous regularity on a streaming and slippery focsle. We waited, to everyone's relief, in vain.

On leaving Port Lyttelton, the Mayoress, herself a Maori, had presented a greenstone to the Admiral: this is supposed to bring good fortune on a voyage, and it certainly looked as if it had. We rode across the Southern Ocean in an anticyclone for most of our crossing and the seas were never as big as those we had coming round the Cape.

On the day of leaving Chatham Island the news was flashed round that anyone who wanted to grow a beard could start straight away. There was much peering at other peoples faces the next day to find out who were the blacklegs. When the word got round that the Duke of Edinburgh and four of his Household, one being so bold as to flaunt Queen's Regulations and Air Ministry Instructions, had locked their razors away, the waverers took heart and three-quarters of the wardroom, most of the Household staff and 159 Yachtsmen followed suit. A committee of taste was set up to propose the terms of a beard-growing competition. The interest we took in each other's increasingly disreputable appearances was intense, to say nothing of the inordinate vanity with which we secretly studied our growths several times a day to see how we were getting on. For those who made a slow start, a fertiliser, said to be highly efficacious, was recommended: it consisted of a two to one mixture of Teepol and Mackeson's stout but of course no one would admit to having been so unmanly as to descend to such a subterfuge.

During these first few days, Sir Raymond Priestley gave us a most interesting lecture on the Antarctic and recounted his own incredible experience with the Northern Party of Scott's 1910-1913 Antarctic Expedition when they had to be left to survive a winter with practically no food and inadequate clothing.

On the third day out we joined our tanker the *Wave Chief* and topped up with fuel in a calm sea. We planned to top up every two or three days after this so as to allow for any sudden deterioration in the weather. Having

topped up on Sunday, 23rd December, we felt safe until after Christmas, the preparations for which were now in full swing. Secret meetings were being held all over the Yacht to plan the decor of each mess and the strains of carol practices disturbed the calm of the dog watches.

#### *CHRISTMAS EVE*

To-day the weather gave us our first bad moment: the wind had gone round to the south-west and was bringing up an increasing swell. There was some doubt as to whether to proceed with cooking the Christmas dinner but at noon it was decided to go ahead. The majority of the ingredients for the Christmas menu had been supplied from the victualling yard in Sydney. During our stay there the Welfare Committee had also bought quite a large quantity of decorations which a big Sydney store had given us at a very good discount. The last items to arrive on board were Christmas trees, a gift from the New Zealand forest authorities.

All those things which had been laid in were now being put to their full use: in particular, there was feverish activity on the messdecks as each mess strove to outdo its rivals for the prize for the best decorations. Painting and hammering had been going on in odd corners for some days, and the messdeck officer had been viewed with some suspicion as a potential spy!

Another most important preliminary had been the trials on the radio circuit for the Duke of Edinburgh's Christmas day broadcast. For several nights, initially starting at 4 a.m. and becoming later as the clocks went on, hour-long tests had been carried out; some of these were direct and some via Barbados and Ascension Island.

By the evening, the Christmas spirit was well in evidence - everyone cheerful and looking forward to tomorrow's festivities. To round off the day, a group of Household, officers and Yachtsmen, painstakingly coached by the bandmaster, toured the messdecks singing carols accompanied on the organ (portable small). Both the party and the organ survived the trip in fairly good order, being suitably refreshed in the wardroom. The air of anticipation kept many sing-songs going until

fairly late, but by 11 p.m. everyone was turned in gaining strength for the morrow.

#### CHRISTMAS DAY

The day started at 6 a.m. with the B.B.C.'s afternoon broadcast from all round the world coming over the S.R.E. Lieutenant-Commander Wall, with Chief Petty Officers Barnden and Boggust, was already testing the link between the improvised studio in the Queen's sitting-room and the B.B.C. At 6.55 a.m. exactly the great moment came; BRITANNIA, 1,200 miles from the nearest land and 9,000 miles from London, was on the air. It was difficult to realise, as we sat listening to the Duke of Edinburgh's speech, that his voice was being relayed back to us from the B.B.C. over that vast distance at almost the same instant that his words were leaving the Queen's sitting room, less than the ship's length away. After the National Anthem we heard H.M. the Queen speaking from Sandringham. To all of us in BRITANNIA who have the honour to serve her so closely it was a particularly moving moment when she mentioned us and our families in her speech.

Several officers and Yachtsmen spoke to their wives and families over the radio telephone at breakfast time. Reception was remarkably good and one wife, who had had no warning of the call, wasted many precious seconds of their three minutes arguing with her husband as to where the call was coming from - she felt sure that he couldn't possibly be talking from the Southern Ocean.

By breakfast time, those who had sternly resisted for nearly four months looking inside parcels labelled "open on Christmas Day" had seen what their families had given them. Lieutenant-Commander Wall's present to each of his Communications Branch was the most original of all. Before leaving Portsmouth he had arranged for each man's wife, mother or sweetheart to make a tape recording of a Christmas message and this was played back to them on Christmas morning. Each officer of the watch received a box of matches and Commander (N) was given a compass which he insisted pointed the wrong way until he remembered which hemisphere we were in.



"LACING" THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING



ON THE SEAMEN'S MESSDECK, CHRISTMAS DAY



WHALE CATCHER COMING ALONGSIDE USING WHALE AS FENDER



AT PORT LOCKROY

From an early hour after breakfast many Yachtsmen were startled by a new Vice-Admiral, with his Commander and Secretary, who were to be seen doing comprehensive rounds of the ship. Closer inspection revealed a team from the M(E)'s messdeck led by L.M.(E) Hammond who had started off the fun with this traditional impersonation. The interval between breakfast and church was occupied with essential domestic chores, with issues of Christmas fare in the form of beer, fruit and nuts and with last minute touching up of decorations.

Church was held in the Royal dining-room at 10.15, a very well attended service with carols, Christmas hymns and the traditional five readings from the Bible. As soon as church was over, rum was issued and rounds of the messdecks started. Led by the Chief Pusser, whose prowess on the bugle was much remarked upon, and followed by the youngest member of the Yacht's company, Steward Gibson, dressed as a commander, His Royal Highness accompanied by the Household and officers visited all the messes in turn starting from aft in the Royal Household staff mess.

It was soon evident that a tremendous amount of thought and effort had gone into the decorating. Hammock nettings were transformed into bars and fireplaces and skilful use had been made of flags and bunting. Yards of streamers had been made for everyone by Yeoman Dellenty on his sewing machine and the greenery from New Zealand and Chatham Island was brought to light. There was Christmas scenery on painted canvas to be seen through a mock window, a huge Father Christmas, a gigantic Christmas card showing the Yacht steaming past an iceberg, a vast balloon with a painted face and many other novelties of great ingenuity. Everyone was in high humour. His Royal Highness obviously enjoying it all, accepted many small presents on his way round. The one he received on the M(E)'s port messdeck took some getting at: inside a large parcel he found a small packet of razor blades but was knee deep in the wrappings before his curiosity was satisfied. His greatest difficulty was in selecting the best decorated mess. After much thought, the Communications mess was deservedly

chosen and they were summoned to the wardroom to receive a prize of cigars.

After a good deal of singing and merriment, everyone sat down to a sumptuous dinner. And here, full marks must go to Chief Cook Merrie and his galley staff who had worked extremely hard for several days, and on Christmas day also, to produce this magnificent spread. Full justice was done to it in due reward and the Christmas day atmosphere was completed by the sight of snowflakes drifting past the scuttles from a heavy snowstorm which started at 12.20 p.m.

Before peace and quiet descended upon the Yacht in the afternoon, a long Conga line wound its way around, and, to Mr Pardy's horror, worked its way into the Royal apartments. The Duke of Edinburgh was nowhere to be found, until someone thought of looking at the tail-end of the Conga !

The ball was set rolling again after tea with a Smoking Concert and later the chief petty officers came into the wardroom. His Royal Highness very kindly asked the wardroom to join his Christmas night party aft and throughout the Yacht the festivities continued until the last reveller went to bed at 1 a.m. So ended a Christmas day which will long be remembered as the happiest any of us had ever spent away from our families.

#### BOXING DAY ONWARDS

The temperature had been dropping steadily for the last few days and our approach to the Antarctic continent was truly heralded by the sight of a tabular iceberg, some three and a half miles long and one hundred and fifty feet high, at noon on Boxing day.

Arctic clothing had been issued before Christmas and this was most welcome, particularly with the night temperature only a few degrees above freezing. It was particularly welcome on Friday, 28th December when we fuelled from *Wave Chief* for the third time. The wind was up to force 5 and we had to fuel from astern. Unfortunately the line bringing the grass over parted and we had to grapple the grass from the focsle. This took some time as it was lying six or eight feet below the water.

When it was finally grappled we discovered that the free end was round the port propeller: fortunately, this was successfully cleared and we carried on to embark the fuel. The tale of woe was not yet finished however. At midnight that night, the boiler steam pressure started to fall as water in the freshly embarked fuel put out the furnace sprayers. A quick changeover of tanks restored the situation but investigations throughout the night showed that every tank into which fuel had been embarked was contaminated with sea water. We therefore went alongside the *Wave Chief* in calm weather the next morning and discharged all the contaminated fuel. Later, as fresh fuel oil was being taken in, the wind and sea got up. The refuelling operation was completed in the nick of time because, at the end, it was blowing half a gale and the accurate station-keeping which was essential, was rapidly becoming difficult. The *Wave Chief* later found that the tank from which we had originally been supplied with oil was contaminated with sea water owing to leaking rivets. The *Wave Chief* left us that afternoon bound for the Falkland Islands, and H.M.S. *Protector* joined and remained as our escort as far as South Georgia.

The wind rose to gale force the next day, but on the following morning of New Year's eve, as we crossed the Antarctic Circle at about breakfast time, it dropped away. By 10 a.m. when we made our rendezvous with the whale factory ship, *Southern Harvester*, it was a bright, sunny day with a light wind and only a longish swell remaining.

Then came one of the most remarkable transfer operations ever seen at sea anywhere. A whale catcher with a big whale secured to her port side, came alongside the Yacht, the whale acting as a fender. And most effective it was too, even though it was a week old by then and rather "high." A big fishing basket, slung from the top of the wildly swaying catcher's mast, was hauled over to BRITANNIA'S boat deck: the Duke of Edinburgh got in, sat well down in the bottom and was then swung out to be lowered with great skill on to the catcher's deck, unscathed. He, and the members of the Household who were similarly transferred, were then

taken over to the *Southern Harvester* to be shown round this gigantic butcher's shop.

At noon one of *Protector's* helicopters came over to deliver some mail which she had brought down from the Falkland Islands for us. Later in the day, the Royal party was delivered back on board by fish basket from the catcher which had conducted the operation so skilfully in the morning.

We then set off for Graham Land and it was only the icebergs around us and the cool breeze which destroyed the illusion of a summer's day at sea in the Mediterranean.

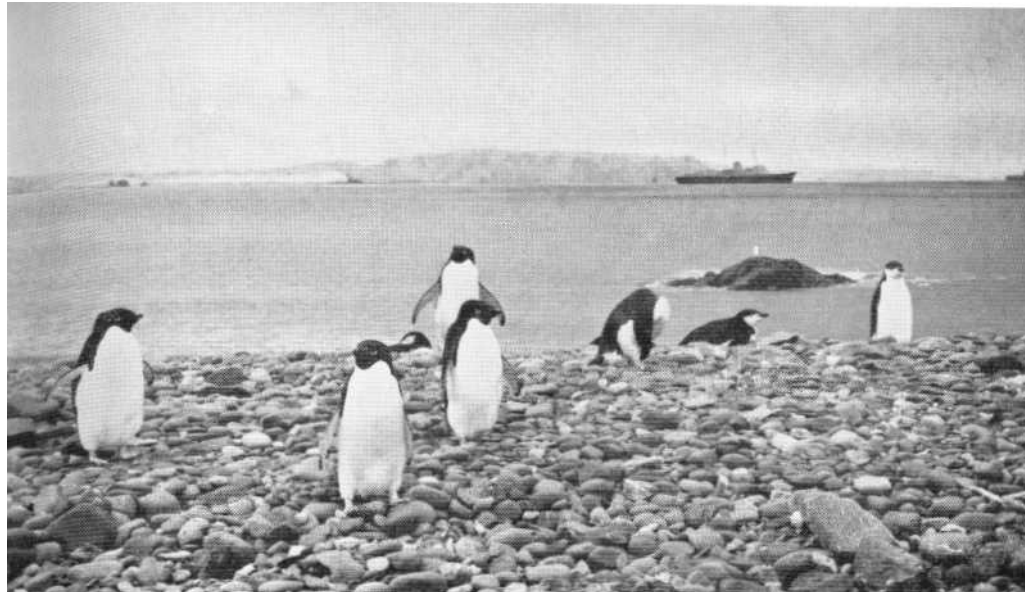
History had been made on this day because it was the first time that any British ladies had crossed the Antarctic Circle.

The sun did not set that night, of course, and the traditional ringing of 16 bells to welcome the New Year was carried out at midnight on the verandah deck in broad daylight. Before the Royal party and wardroom joined hands to sing "Auld Lang Syne," they were entertained by the bridge watchkeepers of the first watch who, led by "Blossom" Howitt and conducted by Petty Officer Hale, gave a soulful rendering of "The old year out and new year in."

#### ANTARCTICA

On New Year's day morning we met the *John Biscoe*, the trim new ship belonging to the Falkland Islands Dependency Survey (F.I.D.S.), off the entrance to the Marthe Strait, the passage past the north of Adelaide Island. The Duke of Edinburgh transferred to the *John Biscoe* and was taken through ice-infested channels to base "W" on Andresen Island, the most southerly base in use for the Graham Land survey.

BRITANNIA, with *Protector* leading, steamed north in very low visibility outside the Biscoe Islands and on 2nd January rounded the northern end of Anvers Island. By this time the fog had cleared and in bright sunshine, we proceeded round to the east of Anvers Island to Base "A" by way of the Gerlache Strait and the narrow Neumayer Channel. Here we were treated to our first close-up of the grandeur and beauty of snow-covered peaks



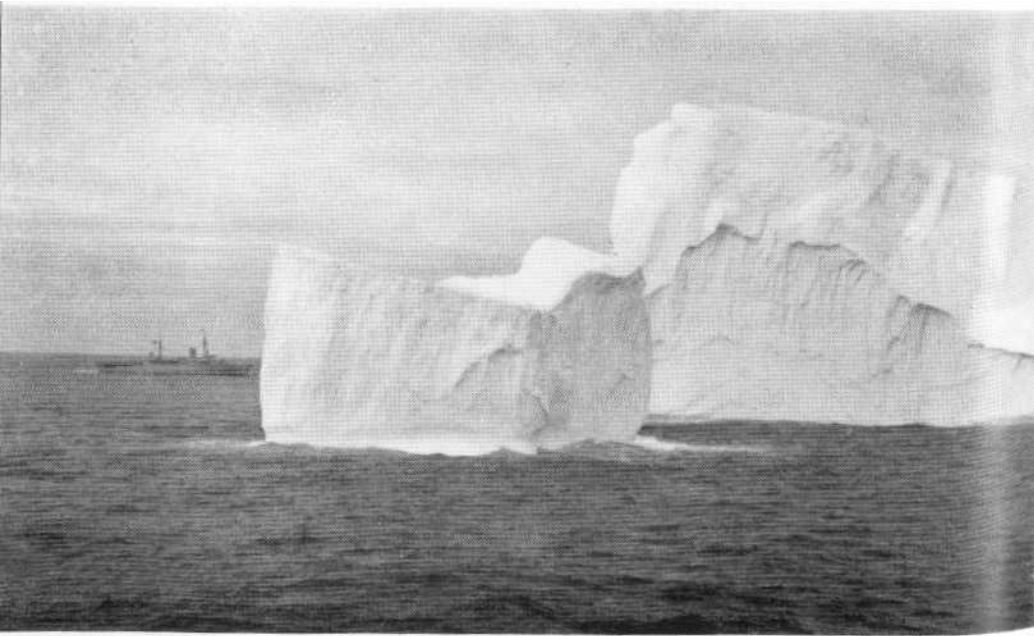
GENTOO PENGUINS AT ADMIRALTY BAY



WHALE FACTORY AT SOUTH GEORGIA



FOOTBALL MATCH AT PORT STANLEY



H.M.S.. PROTECTOR DISAPPEARING BEHIND ICEBERG

and the blue ice of the glaciers between them. We passed many small "bergy bits" of ice in the channels and, when finally stopped off Port Lockroy on Wiencke Island in sight of a penguin rookery ashore, we felt that we had really arrived in the Antarctic. Base "A" at Port Lockroy is the oldest of the F.I.D.S. bases and is the centre of their radio network. Continual ionospheric recordings are also made here.

Two parties went ashore to look at the penguins in their rookeries. They were Gentoo penguins and the mothers were in the process of hatching their two eggs on their nests. Father Gentoo seemed to live a carefree life either popping in and out of the water or tobogganing down the hillside on his tummy. The smell was horrible and Lieutenant Findlay showed us how inadvisable it was to try and cuddle a penguin; his uniform hasn't been the same since!

Here at Port Lockroy the *John Biscoe* rejoined. She had taken the Duke of Edinburgh to Base "F" in the Argentine Islands and Base "N" at the southern end of Anvers Island. After tea, all three ships then proceeded on the short trip to Base "O" at the northern end of the Gerlache Channel on an island in a bay of Graham Land itself. The bay was partly ice-bound and full of bergy bits and the *John Biscoe* therefore proceeded on while we waited at the entrance and admired the magnificent scenery. Base "O" was newly established in 1956 in the hope that, from it, access to the mainland would be possible.

The Royal party returned to BRITANNIA shortly before midnight in broad daylight having enjoyed their visits immensely. We then set off for Deception Island on which Base "B" is established together with one Argentine and one Chilean base. Deception makes a good jumping-off point for other bases since it is ice-free for most of the year. The harbour, encircled by the horseshoe shaped island, is the crater of an old volcano. It has hot springs and the water at the edge of the foreshore is warm. There was much less snow here than on any other island in the area.

We arrived off Deception Island in thick fog towards

noon on Thursday, 3rd January, and anchored outside the harbour: the Royal party went on to the base by motor boat, conned in by radar and the type 615. Early in the afternoon the fog cleared and we were able to pass through Neptune's Bellows and anchor off the base, having passed the sorry sight of a whale catcher aground in the narrows.

Huntings Aerosurveys Limited had an aerial survey team with two Catalinas based here. The F.I.D.S. men at the base gave a party ashore for the wardroom and then, together with the Huntings people, were invited back on board for supper. The Duke of Edinburgh invited them to a film in the Royal dining-room and delighted them by choosing "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers."

The F.I.D.S. men in their base hut had a splendid collection of necktie ends pinned on the wall. With the aid of a large pair of scissors they collected more from BRITANNIA, plus two lady's handkerchiefs. Lieutenant-Commander Parker wasn't wearing a tie and so he lost the tail of his tartan shirt.

We left this rather barren place at 11 a.m. the next day and steamed along the South Shetland Islands to arrive at Admiralty Bay, King George Island, at tea-time. Once more we were treated to the fabulous scenery which the Antarctic offers. Admiralty Bay is very large and is normally ice-bound even in the summer. We were able to proceed quite freely along most of its length however and, before going to Base "G" near the inner end, we hove to half-way along, off the entrance to Escurra Inlet, where the Duke of Edinburgh landed to look at the penguin rookery. This was huge and, where the hillside running down to the sea was free from snow, there were literally hundreds of thousands of birds.

We then moved across the bay and anchored off the base quite close to two inlets which were frozen over and full of growlers and bergy bits. We were surrounded by magnificent glaciers and stretches of ice cliff varying from 100 to 200 feet high. The ten men at the base had only had a few hours' warning by radio of our visit and were delighted to see the Duke of Edinburgh

and his party. They were absolutely shattered to see Miss Stevenson and Miss Eadie walk into their but and could scarcely believe their eyes, some of them not having seen a girl for two years.

We steamed slowly out of the bay at about 10 p.m. with the sun low down in the south-west above the white, snow-capped hills - a very lovely sight.

Not many of us realised what incredible luck we had had on this Antarctic adventure. We went there in one of the mildest summers on record and for the majority of the time had perfect weather which showed the beauty of the scenery to perfection. In many summers we should never have got below the Antarctic circle, and should certainly not have been able to visit so many bases.

Saturday and Sunday the 5th and 6th January found us crossing the Drake Passage, that renowned stretch of water below Cape Horn whose "greybeards" and foul weather have fought an almost continuous battle with ships and men through the centuries. We crossed it in calm seas and a light breeze and could hardly believe it possible. If ever we had expected a dusting it was here.

#### FALKLAND ISLANDS

*Monday, 7th - Wednesday, 9th January*

At 6.30 a.m. on Monday morning we stopped at Port William, East Falklands, and fitted kelp strainers over the main inlets before proceeding into Port Stanley further along the inlet. Surprisingly, it was blowing very hard in the harbour and this caused us some anxiety at first about the safety of our berth.

The *Wave Chief* was in the outer harbour and inside, close to our anchorage, the *Shackleton* and the *John Biscoe* were alongside the small jetties. The island, free from snow at this time of the year, looked very barren, being treeless, although it was well covered with coarse grass growing on the peaty soil.

We went ashore just before lunch with bag meals, to go to the races. This was another annual event on a rather more grand style than at Chatham Island. There were two stands here and a Tote but the track was only



half a mile long, and straight, since there wasn't enough suitable flat ground for anything bigger. The Governor, who had been on board throughout the visits in Graham Land, had led us to expect to find all the men gloriously drunk, but in fact the whole thing was very orderly and great fun.

They have a Sailors' race each year, the normal form being to stoke up the jockeys in the bar in the Tote hut beforehand and see how many finish the race on horse back. On this occasion all the entrants were from BRITANNIA and the preliminaries were omitted. The race was over 300 yards and they all got away to a goodish start and thundered past the Commander who was going the wrong way at the half-way mark. The leading three were well bunched together at the finish, with only a length between them, and ended in the order the Duke of Edinburgh, Lieutenant-Commander Parker and the Admiral. The result was received with great acclaim, his Royal Highness having won on a horse which had only been placed in a previous race.

Our soccer team did well to defeat the islanders and were presented with a magnificent silver cup, inscribed for the occasion, to be held in BRITANNIA as a memento of the visit.

A party of officers and yachtsmen with seven shot-guns went off in the evening to Sparrow Cove for a hare shoot. They were most successful but found the five mile walk back from Mengeary Point carrying thirty hares between them, more than they had bargained for. The Electrical contingent caused some anxiety, its D/F equipment having misted up for they were lost in the dark until nearly midnight and stumbled back into camp after leaving their stick of hares somewhere on the moorland.

While this drama was being enacted in the wilds, a much larger party of Yachtsmen were enjoying the warmth of a dance in Stanley where old-time dances were being conducted with great vigour.

The *Protector* very kindly arranged several helicopter flights for us over the island the next morning and the hares which had been left behind the night before were

collected and returned to BRITANNIA by air freight, much to the astonishment of a party of F.I.D.S. men from the *John Biscoe* who had camped out near the place where the hares were collected.

His Royal Highness held a reception on board in the evening and later, at 9.30 p.m., we sailed for Fox Bay in West Falklands.

The 150 miles journey to Fox Bay was completed overnight and we spent the forenoon of Wednesday at anchor there while the Duke of Edinburgh went ashore. This barren looking island is the less inhabited of these two large sheep-rearing islands. There is only one doctor and he visits his widely spread practice on horseback.

#### ON PASSAGE TO SOUTH GEORGIA

*Wednesday 9th - Saturday, 12th January*

The Falkland islanders had warned us to expect bad weather on this passage; they said it could almost be guaranteed. However, we joggled along with the stabilisers housed in calm seas, rubbing the Maori Greenstone and hoping for the best.

It was so calm on Friday morning that *Protector* transferred some drums of diesel oil, which we needed, by helicopter. It was also a good day for icebergs. At noon we saw, amongst others, a big tabular berg so well formed that it might almost have been chiselled into its perfect rectangular shape; it was five miles long, about a mile wide and some one hundred and fifty feet high. There was a lot more of it under water. Later at tea-time we passed very close to three other biggish ones, with *Protector* taking photographs of us.

At about 6 p.m. we came across a whale catcher, the *Busen 4*, endeavouring to get into position for the kill. As she twisted and turned to follow this elusive whale we followed her like a shadow expecting to see the end at any moment. But this whale knew its stuff and was still free after two hours. Regretfully we had to turn away and hope for another opportunity of witnessing the final act. We left with respect for a whale's powers of endurance as the hunt had been conducted at a steady 14 knots.

## SOUTH GEORGIA

*Saturday, 12th January*

We entered Leith harbour, which is in the middle of the north coast, at 9 a.m. and were once more greeted with magnificent Antarctic scenery on a lovely sunny day. We stayed there just long enough for the Duke of Edinburgh to be shown over Salvesson's whaling factory and then went round to Grytviken, the Bay of Pots, arriving at 11.30 a.m., leaving his Royal Highness to follow in a whale catcher.

There were two icebergs in the harbour and some wonderful glaciers rising up from the shore line. It was down one of these glaciers that Shackleton had slid some 2,000 feet on the seat of his pants after his gallant voyage in an open boat from Elephant Island, off Graham Land. He lies buried in the neat little cemetery ashore here and on the headland near our anchorage stands a memorial to him.

The whale factory at Grytviken is owned by the Compania Argentina de Pesca. Moored neatly nearby were five smart catchers in line abreast, dressed overall in honour of the Royal visit. When his Royal Highness landed in the afternoon these five catchers fired a Royal Salute with their harpoon guns, making a rousing noise.

Our soccer team played *Protector's* on the gravel pitch behind the factory in the afternoon and were defeated, much to the delight of the *Protector* supporters, some of whom had arrived by helicopter at half-time.

We then went to the factory slip and watched a big Baleen whale being hauled up. In something under three-quarters of an hour this 70-ton monster was cut up by the flensers with their razor-sharp knives and the various parts hauled up ramps to be disposed of in the cooking pots above. All those without bad colds found the smell revolting; the mere sight of this gigantic carnage made others pale round the gills; but it was a fascinating sight nonetheless. Onlookers ran the continual risk of being "dive-bombed" because, over the whole area, there was a shrieking cloud of gulls which swooped and tore out any piece of unattended whale flesh.

At 5 p.m. we sailed at high speed to get round to the Bay of Isles in time to see the King Penguin rookery by daylight. We arrived there soon after 8 p.m. and some of us went ashore to mingle with the thousands of penguins which were there, a mixture of King Penguins and Gentoos with a large number of elephant seals thrown in for good measure.

By 10.30 p.m. it was dark and we weighed anchor to head for Gough Island.

## ON PASSAGE TO GOUGH ISLAND

*Saturday, 12th - Wednesday, 16th January*

Having discovered in Grytviken that a fleet of catchers were operating about 200 miles north-east of South Georgia and this being roughly on our track for Gough, we steered a course to meet them early in the morning of Sunday, 13th January.

At 8.30 a.m. in a calm sea we were in the middle of four catchers all in contact with whales, and surrounded by icebergs, some of huge proportions. At one time, 35 icebergs could be counted with the naked eye. Between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m., we were in at the kill of three whales. The third one was most spectacular for, as the harpoon struck the monster, it dived and then leaped half out of the water in its death throes like a gigantic salmon. Dead whales, filled with air and marked with the flags of the catchers, were dotted about the area. It looked like the beginning of a successful day for the whalers.

We then proceeded on our course for Gough Island. There was great activity in the dog watches from now on with deck game competitions in full swing and the Wandering Shield being competed for hotly in Uckers, Cribbage, Squat football and a variety of other ways.

Our last iceberg was sighted in the morning watch of Monday, 14th January. Late that morning, as if it sensed that it was leaving its native surroundings, the penguin chick, which Chief Yeoman Fisher was trying to hatch from its egg under the warmth of an electric light bulb, started to knock on the shell. It never saw the light however, which is probably just as well, because Sir Raymond Priestley's recommended diet of regurgitated

shrimps might have brought the C.P.O's. messmen out on strike !

We were issued with our red nose certificates soon after leaving South Georgia. The Duke of Edinburgh and Mr Edward Seago had designed and made the lino cut from which they were reproduced and, together with other members of the Royal party, had printed, coloured and numbered each certificate individually, Chief Painter Dore having inserted the names. The lino-cut was then given a "flotation test" so as to preserve the copyright.

At 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 15th January, we completed the circumnavigation of the world in the period of 135 days. Four long blasts were sounded on the siren and according to the Royal party's Press release, there was a fly past in formation of three albatrosses who dipped in salute.

The next morning in sunshine, we met the *Wave Chief* again, refuelled and parted company; we would meet her next at Tristan da Cunha.

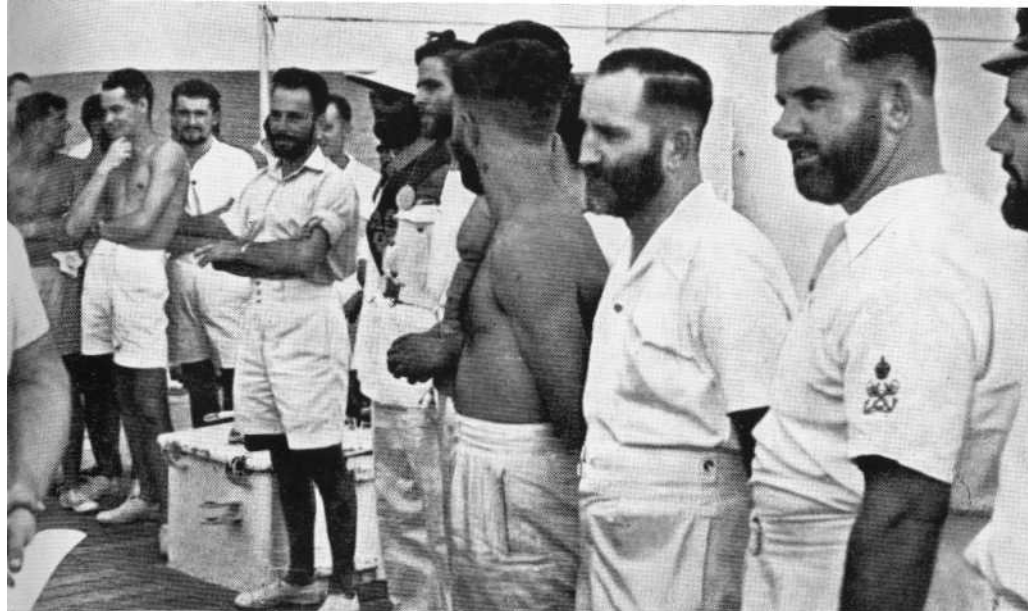
By noon Gough Island was in sight and at that distance appeared as an almost symmetrical cone. As we drew nearer, the steep ridges which run down to the cliffs from the central heights became more prominent, and the dark rock wall of the island was broken by the white smears of the many waterfalls which drop to the sea from the ends of the valleys. As we turned round the south of the island towards our anchorage on the eastern side, great flocks of seabirds rose from the water ahead of the ship - albatrosses, skua gulls, shearwaters, terns and brown petrels in their hundreds.

We turned into Quest Bay at 3.30 p.m. and anchored off the tiny rocky beach where the South African weather station was established. There was a certain amount of embarrassment on the focsle before finally anchoring because neither anchor would go down when the slips were knocked off.

#### GOUGH ISLAND

*Wednesday, 16th January*

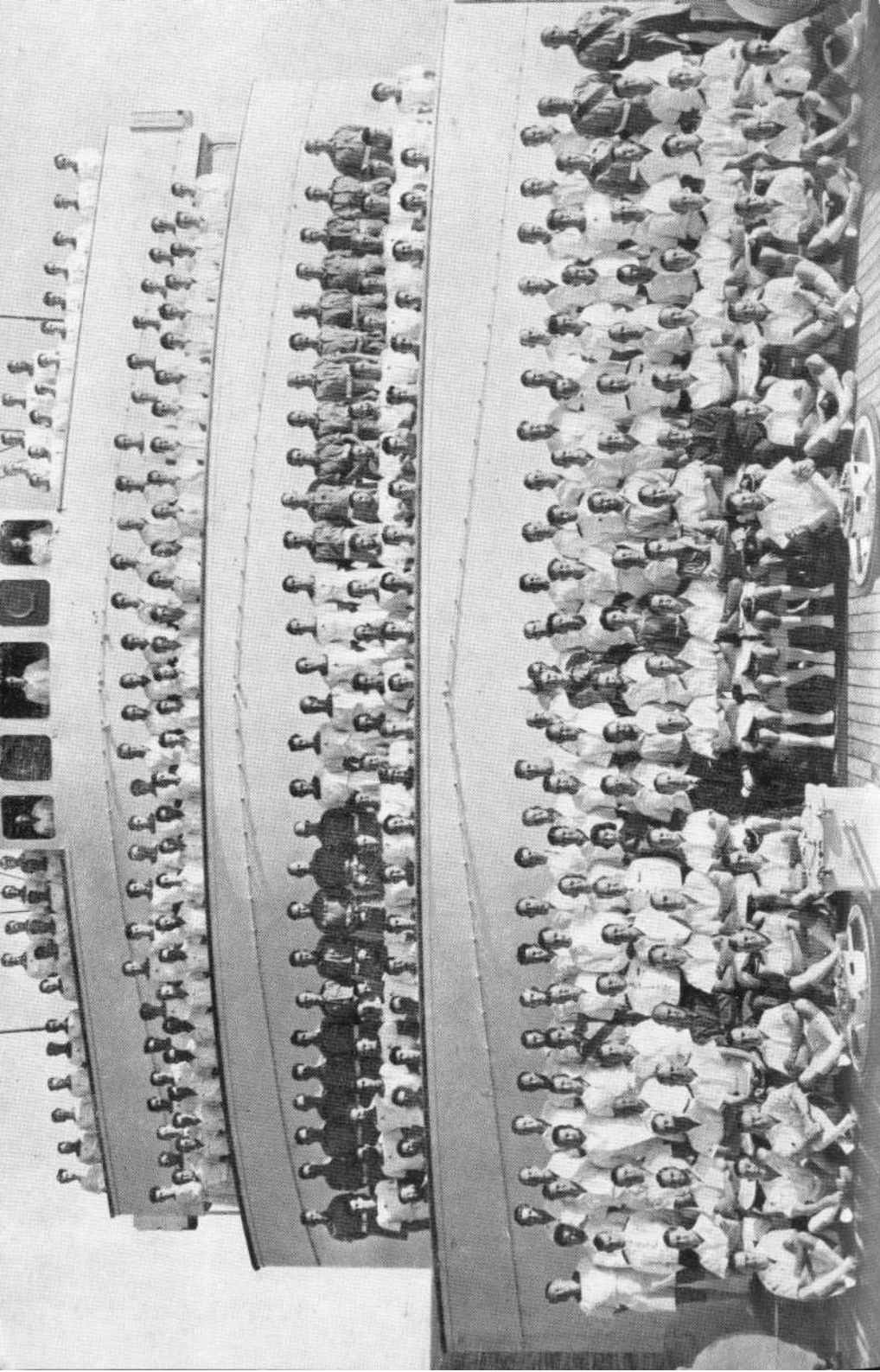
The island, rising steeply from the sea, looked remarkably green after the black and white of the Antarctic



BEARD COMPETITION



BEING FOLLOWED INTO LISBON



islands. Although elsewhere the sky was clear, Gough was topped by a large cloud.

While the Royal party were inshore inspecting the weather station, two fishing parties went away in the jolly-boats. The chief petty officers in one boat, fishing on the bottom, caught very little. The other boat, with officers and stewards, was more successful with spinners at the edge of the kelp and came back with eight or more sizeable snook.

One of the meteorologists ashore, who was complaining of a pain in his side, came on board to be examined. Sub-acute appendicitis was diagnosed and he remained on board to be operated on successfully at sea, later that night.

Before we left at 6 p.m. we were entertained by two Right whales inshore playing at being dolphins. Their antics in the water were extraordinary for such large beasts.

*TRISTAN DA CUNHA*

*Thursday, 17th January*

The high wind and large swell experienced during the overnight passage from Gough made us fear that conditions at Tristan might be too bad to make a landing.

However, as we passed Nightingale and Inaccessible Islands during the morning watch, the wind eased and the sea abated. By the time we were off the settlement on the north-west corner of the island, conditions for landing were almost perfect and we anchored off Big Beach at 9.30 a.m. We had some trouble with kelp here and the lights on board nearly failed twice through the dynamo cooling water-pipes becoming choked.

The settlement consists of about 250 people and is called Edinburgh in honour of a former Duke of Edinburgh who visited the island in 1867 - ninety years ago. The settlement lies at the foot of a 7,000 feet volcanic peak on a gently sloping plateau and is made up of a cluster of rough stone houses thatched with dried flax leaves. Until 1949, when the crawfish canning factory above Big Beach was erected and put into production, there was no money of any sort on the island. The

islanders did not need it. They were self-supporting with plenty of sheep, cattle and vegetables.

The Repetto, Glass, Rogers and Green families, descended mainly from shipwrecked mariners whose wives were provided from St. Helena, make up most of the population and have intermarried carefully on the third and fourth cousin basis. They are very nice people with natural good manners and were not in the least ruffled by a Royal visit.

The islanders' canvas-hulled long-boats, freshly painted for the occasion, sailed out to BRITANNIA, and the Duke of Edinburgh, in Admiral of the Fleet's uniform, went ashore to be landed on the pebble beach and cheered by the islanders and their womenfolk. He took the boat's tiller going inshore, the Chief of the island, Mr Willie Repetto, acting as pilot.

The afternoon was rather spoiled by low cloud and drizzle but all the islanders gathered round the steel skeleton of their new dance hall to watch the Duke of Edinburgh lay the foundation stone.

After the ceremony, the crowd adjourned to the football pitch where a scratch side of Yachtsmen played an amusing and friendly game against the island team on a sloping pitch bordered by a cliff, the game ending in a draw. The islanders, with long white trousers tucked into their socks, looked more like younger and beardless editions of W. G. Grace than embryos of Stanley Matthews.

Re-embarkation into the long-boats after the match proved a little more difficult for the spectators than one would have expected. The tide was low of course and the pebbles were undoubtedly slippery. However, the laundry crew minimised the effect of sea water on most people's clothing. Before leaving, the Duke of Edinburgh and his party went to the school hall and joined in the island dancing. The music was provided by the Royal Marine band and the local band alternately. The Royal party were taught a new dance, the Pillow dance, which provided a lot of fun.

We sailed at 8.15 p.m. and very soon ran into a hard north-westerly blow.

#### ON PASSAGE TO ST. HELENA

*Thursday, 17th - Tuesday, 22nd January*

The wind had dropped the next day and we sailed on to St. Helena in calm, sunny weather with a rapidly rising temperature. We went into whites on Saturday, 19th January, five days after sighting our last iceberg.

On the next day, Sunday, we fuelled for the last time from *Wave Chief* and she left us to go to Curacoa.

After church on Sunday, all the bearded ones gathered on the focsle for a photograph. Most of the beards were fairly respectable by then, so we didn't mind facing the camera. The rot started after the photograph was taken however and from then on more and more shaven chins appeared each day until, at Bathurst, beards were in a very small minority.

On Sunday night, we were diverted to meet the *S.S. Mabel Ryan* whose first engineer had acute appendicitis. He was transferred by boat to BRITANNIA soon after midnight and the next morning had his appendix removed.

We had to speed up to 17 knots as a result of the delay and, because of the diversion, Commander (N) was particularly anxious to fix the Yacht's position with his noon sight on the Monday. By an extraordinary coincidence however, the sun's declination at this time was practically identical with our latitude and so he remained little the wiser; he was a little hurt to find considerable sales resistance to his explanation. Despite this technical difficulty, we arrived off St. Helena on time.

#### ST. HELENA

*Tuesday, 22nd January*

The island looked most forbidding and desolate as we steamed along the coast to Jamestown on the north-west side. The township nestles at the bottom of a glacial valley where landing is often difficult because of the heavy swell at this time of the year. When we anchored at 9.30 a.m. however, the sea was almost flat but there was still enough swell at the landing pier to make it hazardous for motor boats to go alongside. We therefore transferred to the island boats which went into the

stone steps stern first and, with the aid of hanging ropes, we jumped ashore as the opportunity came.

Going up the mountain on the way inland to look at the remainder of the island, many of us stopped to look giddily down the Jacob's Ladder, an almost vertical stone stairway down the side of the valley. Others, more energetic, climbed its 699 steps and having reached the top had the fun of seeing the island boys, in exchange for shillings, slide down the four hundred feet drop sitting on the handrails.

The change of scenery as the centre of the island was reached was quite unexpected. One climbed up to nearly 2,000 feet through cactus covered lava to be met by a bowl of green grass, dotted with trees, which might have been English countryside. As the other side of the island was reached, one found a magnificent view down a precipitous valley to Sandy Bay where Lot's Wife and other craggy peaks were outlined against a soft blue sea which merged into the colouring of the sky at the horizon. The slopes of the valley were covered in deep green flax plants which provide the island with its main industry.

Many of us went to Longwood, Napoleon's house, to be taken back in thought a hundred and forty years to the time when the "Little Emperor" lived out his exile and died amidst that beautiful scenery.

Later in the day the officers who attended the garden party at Plantation House found another Jonathan, an elderly tortoise, who was one hundred and eighty-five years older than their messmate and who, in his youth, would have seen Napoleon taking his daily exercise on horseback.

His Royal Highness gave a dinner party on board in the evening and, when the guests had all embarked into shore boats, we sailed at 11 p.m.

#### *ON PASSAGE TO ASCENSION ISLAND*

*Tuesday, 22nd - Friday, 25th January*

We were well into the tropics by now and enjoyed a succession of glorious calm sunny days, steaming quietly north-west.

On the first day of the passage, the beard competition

judging took place on the focsle. There were not many spectators because the majority of the Yacht's company were competitors. Lord Cilcennin, Sir Raymond Priestley, the Commander, and Chief Writer Barrett were the judges and obviously enjoyed themselves. None of the beards came away in the judges' hands, all being real and deeply rooted by that time. Musicians Casseldon and Fitzgerald, who had entertained us by turning up dressed as the Lion of Judah and his slave, won the prizes for the bushiest and most elegant beards respectively. Petty Officer Mander's beard was selected as the handsomest and, after a long debate, Leading Seaman Ward took the prize for the most colourful. The judges were not exercised over the choice of "the one which didn't quite" because, by popular acclaim, Able Seaman Solbach took this prize.

The remaining days passed peacefully until on Friday, 25th January, we sighted that heap of volcanic slag, discovered on Ascension Day, 1501, by a Portuguese mariner, and named Ascension Island two years later by Alfonso D'Alberquerque.

#### *ASCENSION ISLAND*

*Friday, 25th January*

We thought the people ashore were keeping their Zone Time of one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. G.M.T. was being kept on board so as to avoid altering the clocks and so we dropped anchor at 10 a.m. fondly thinking that it was 9 a.m. ashore, our agreed time of arrival. Unfortunately, they were keeping G.M.T. also and we were therefore an hour late! However, it gave us an hour longer with them after lunch and so nobody minded.

Having looked at the scenery, we thought we had made another mistake and anchored off the moon. The island was almost completely barren. There were smooth mounds of red dust at the bottom of which the lower slopes looked like roughly ploughed fields growing only cactus and strange tufts of grey grass. Oddly enough some very healthy looking sheep and wild donkey seemed to find enough to live on. The highest peak, called

Green Mountain, had been skilfully cultivated during the nineteenth century, when the island was a Royal Marine establishment. The experts from Kew Gardens had advised on what could be grown, and now vegetation is slowly spreading down the slopes of the peak. There is enough cultivated soil to support a dairy herd and to grow all the vegetables needed on the island. The top of the mountain is cut into terraces and pineapples, bananas, oranges and lemons all grow there as do different coloured lilies. Water is in very short supply and the ration is eight gallons per person per day, one-quarter of what a Yachtsman uses.

The island is inhabited largely by Cable and Wireless personnel. It is an important telephone link between England, South Africa and South America. There are now a large number of St. Helenans who have been brought in to work for an American construction company who are setting up a guided missile observation station.

The large aircraft runway built during the war is still in use but all the outbuildings are derelict.

We landed on to a pontoon moored near the jetty and from there were taken to the landing steps by island boats.

The Exiles' Club entertained the Duke of Edinburgh at the end of the forenoon and afterwards gave a lunch party for the wardroom. The turtle shells on the club walls were a reminder that, at one time, turtles for the soup at the Lord Mayor's banquet always came from Ascension Island.

We sailed at 4 p.m. with the meat of two turtles on board for our use.

#### *ON PASSAGE TO BATHURST*

*Friday, 25th - Tuesday, 29th January*

This passage, with the visit to Gambia, was the last stage of the Duke of Edinburgh's long and interesting cruise. As we crossed the equator for the fourth and last time, not counting the zig-zag over it on the first occasion, the sea temperature was up in the eighties and we basked in the rays of the hot sun. The knock-out

competitions were starting another cycle and the Wandering Shield was going the rounds faster than ever, with many novel competitions being introduced. One of the more amusing contests was between the petty officers and the quarterdeck when the first competitor had to pour water into one end of a 30 foot fire hose and get some out at the other end.

On Monday, 28th January, H.M.S. *Pelican* joined us at noon to act as escort into Bathurst. She looked very smart as she came past, her ship's company assembled to cheer ship, having just fired a Royal Salute.

The time passed quickly and happily until, on Tuesday morning, we entered the mouth of the Gambia River in low visibility. The Duke of Edinburgh took over the handling of the Yacht from midstream. After a big sweeping turn to starboard to face the last of the flood tide, we were berthed gently alongside at 9.30 a.m.

#### *BATHURST*

*Tuesday, 29th - Thursday, 31st January*

As the Duke of Edinburgh landed there was a smart guard and band of the Royal West African Frontier Force assembled in the square at the end of the jetty to salute him. Gathered on the beach on either side of the jetty, a large crowd of Africans cheered as soon as he stepped ashore and then rushed off at high speed to get into other vantage points along the route.

The Yacht was moved to the oiling jetty at midday where she remained, after taking in fuel, until the next morning.

Most of us went off in the afternoon to see the exhibition of native dancing which had been arranged for his Royal Highness.

The dances were not as spectacular as those we had seen in New Guinea, being conducted by smaller groups or by individuals. The piece de resistance was unquestionably the dance performed by a decrepit old man who, with much rolling of the eyes and alarming grimaces and having succeeded in tying himself into a knot, ended by kissing the sole of one of his gnarled and particularly horny feet. The dancing camel, a rather ludicrous sight,