

Whilst at Divisions on the first Sunday morning of March, a signal was received from the Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf, ordering the ship to raise steam and proceed at full speed for Aden. Seventeen knots were being made as "Loch Fada" steamed eastwards and out of the Gulf, then two days later a further signal diverted the ship to Mombasa. Rumours were making their inevitable rounds and one of these wild "buzzes", that the ship had been going to Cyprus, was very interesting, for, although the ship's company did not know it, the purpose of the mission was to embark a personage from there for passage to the Seychelles.

At 1106 on Saturday, 10th March, "Loch Fada" crossed the equator in longitude 43° 34' East and King Neptune's Herald boarded her to say that, in view of the short notice, His Majesty would be unable to hold his Court on board that day, but would visit the ship in all his royal splendour at some later date. In the evening the ship was buzzing with excitement after the B.B.C. news had stated that she was already on her way to the Seychelles from Mombasa carrying the Cypriot Deportees. No one knew quite what this meant but the journey was continued and a day later Mombasa was reached, where the ship fuelled, received provisions and some very welcome mail. The deportees it was learnt had left Mombasa the previous evening in H.M.E.A.S. "Rosalind" so "Loch Fada" sailed to rendezvous with her in a channel some 40 miles to the south. Owing to the possibility, however, of being followed in launches by the Press, who were also aware perhaps that the deportees were not in Mombasa, course was set for the Seychelles and altered for the channel when out of sight of land. There, Archbishop Makarios, the Bishop of Kyrenia and two others plus escort were transferred from the "Rosalind" in comparative silence except for the noise of a single aircraft, which had been chartered by an enterprising photographer, and which had been shadowing the ship for most of the afternoon with little or no success. No boats or launches had followed the ship so it was presumed that possible followers had been deceived by the tactics adopted. The transfer completed, "Rosalind" sailed for Mombasa and "Loch Fada" for the Seychelles.

Three days later the ship anchored off Port Victoria, Mahe, and the passengers, who possibly had not enjoyed the calm seas and blue skies of the southern hemisphere as much as the ship's company, were disembarked and taken to their accommodation on the Island. This operational commitment had been an enjoyable experience to all personnel and had given them and their relations much to talk about.



Archbishop Makarios embarking in Wasin Channel.

The ship stayed in the delightful surroundings of the Seychelles for three days-an all too short a stay, but then, no visit to these islands could ever be long enough, especially as the reception given to the ship's company by the Seychellois was one which is never likely to be forgotten. After the yellow sandy landscape of the Persian Gulf, the luxuriant greenery of Mahe and the other islands was a sight for sore eyes ; and bathing was a sheer joy, especially with such wonderful hosts, whilst impressions of Beau Vallon, Sharkie Clark's, etc. will not easily be eradicated.

Reluctantly the ship departed and after re-crossing the equator and passing through the Maldiv Islands, the hills of Ceylon were sighted. On alternate evenings during the passage from Bahrein, quiz programmes, containing many topical questions, had been held over the S.R.E. and the winners- of the series, the Petty Officers received their prizes from the Captain on the day before reaching Columbo. As the ship now approached and entered the harbour, many of the ship's company experienced a tropical storm for the first time, with the heavens opening, lightning flashing, thunder rolling and the rain coming down in torrents. This was not the only experience of this kind of weather during the five weeks spent in Columbo, either, for the South West monsoon had broken.

"Loch Fada" was taken in hand for refit soon after arrival and whilst the ship was in dock, the ship's company went to the Rest Camp at Diyatalawa, for the Annual Musketry course, 16 ratings qualifying as Marksmen and 40 for prize money. In addition, the pursuits there, which were many and various, included tennis, golf, cricket, badminton and soccer, whilst walking and cycling, if rather tiring, were popular. The camp was some 4,000 feet above sea level which meant sleeping beneath blankets because of the cold at night : this novelty added to the very enjoyable visit.



Musketeers

The chief item of interest in Colombo and indeed in the whole island during the first two weeks of the ship's stay was the General Election and comparisons with a British General Election proved most interesting. It was in Colombo, when she arrived for an emergency docking, that "Loch Fada" made the acquaintance of the "Superb", whilst the "Diana", towards the end of April, dropped in for a Sunday afternoon on her way to the Monte Bello Islands and the Atomic Bomb tests.

Visits were paid to the ship by the Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Norris, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O. and the First Sea Lord, Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, K.G., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O. Both of these distinguished visitors spoke to the foregathered ship's company, who felt very honoured that Lord Mountbatten especially should find time, in a very full programme of engagements, to visit their ship.

The refit was at last completed and the ship put to sea for engine trials, but overheating of a main bearing caused her ultimate departure from Colombo to be delayed until early May. An enjoyable time had been spent in this wonderful city, famous for its jewellery and ivory, and the period was one of rejuvenation of the ship's company, but after five weeks, all were eager to be on the move once more.

During the voyage to Trincomalee, information was received by signal that the ship would not now be taking part in the Atomic Tests near the Monte Bello Islands, which was a bitter disappointment to all on board; for the cruise to Singapore, Christmas Island and possibly Freemantle had been looked forward to with great interest. However, the ship arrived in Trincomalee harbour and berthed alongside at Saigang Jetty.

The main interests there were the many sporting activities which took place and great enjoyment was derived from them, by all who took part. But life wasn't all play because Seamanship Boards, for advancement to Petty Officer and Leading Seaman, were convened, causing many ratings to walk around the ship looking extremely harassed. Further engine trials which were carried out to test the performance of the main bearing resulted in the ship being considered fully operational once again and on completion of these trials she was engaged for several days exercising with "Superb". The exercises consisted of 4in. and close range H.A. shoots at smoke bursts, simple night encounters, light jackstay transfers, towing and fuelling at sea.



Recoil

It had also been planned that "Loch Fada" should fire a demonstration double salvo of action Squid bombs near the Flagship, but unfortunately all the bombs failed to explode, much to the disappointment of both ships' companies, especially "Superb's", many of whom were watching Squid being operated for the first time. A further test was made at a later date but this time defects were found in the bombs themselves which necessitated the whole outfit being changed for a newly tested set. Although this delayed the departure for Cochin, the ship was now in all senses of the word, ready for anything.

Three most enjoyable Sundays had been spent whilst at Trincomalee by parties of officers and ratings on inland excursions. Anuradhapura was visited on two occasions by parties from the ship and amongst the Buddhist Shrines and ruins there was great scope for amateur archaeologists and photographers, whilst statues and carvings, especially the one of the pot-bellied Guna, proved very fascinating. Sigiriya Rock, the former site of a fortress and royal palace, turned out to be a breath-taking experience in two ways, the climb and descent were treacherous and tricky, and the view from the top, some 600ft. above the base, was magnificent. At both places, delightful lunches were served and the journeys from Trincomalee passed through country of dense tropical forest; monkeys and gaily coloured birds being seen everywhere.

Now, Trincomalee, so much in the news during the ship's stay there, because of the New Ceylonese Government's programme, was left behind as, in the height of the South West monsoon with its accompanying strong winds, heavy rains and great humidity, the visit to the West Coast of the Indian sub-continent began.

Cochin, which Vasco de Gama had made as his headquarters four centuries ago, is now important as an Indian Naval Training Base. The Indian Naval personnel did much for the ship's company in the form of entertainment such as a dance, a sight-seeing tour and sports fixtures, whilst visits to the various departments ashore were returned by conducted tours of the ship. A party of four officers and sixteen ratings, amongst whom were the ship's Rugby team, spent the weekend at the High Range Club, Munnar. The reception given them by the tea planters high up in the hills, 120 miles from Cochin, was stupendous and although the hard fought rugger match was lost, the interesting visits to the tea plantations and factories plus the wonderful hospitality extended by everyone will never be forgotten.

The passage to Bombay was uncomfortable owing to the large swell but the monsoon was soon forgotten as the overwhelming hospitality offered to the ship by the British residents began to reveal itself and even the rain, the last to be seen for many months, added its support by staying away during the day. There were no organised visits, but those who saw the impressive Gateway of India, the Military and yet enchanting Marine Drive and the beautiful view from Malabar Hill will always remember them. The ship's water polo team came into its own with games against the Breech Kandy Swimming Club, giving them much required practice, during a Swimming Gala. Many private invitations to members of the ship's company were most pleasurably accepted and everyone left Bombay feeling that this was one of the places, on the East Indies Station, they would like to visit again.

The swell had eased for the passage to Karachi, a place which, on account of its sand and aridity more resembled the Persian Gulf than anything seen during the travels of the past three and a half months. This did not detract from the enjoyment though, because again there was much welcome hospitality, particularly from the United Kingdom Trade Commission, who gave a yen(successful dinner dance attended by some 20 ratings. Parties from the ship thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the Karachi Boat and Gymkhana Clubs, whilst an enjoyable afternoon was had by the ship's yachtsmen who competed against the Karachi Yacht Club for the Mauritius Cup. Cricket and hockey were other sporting features of the visit but eventually, as always, another memorable week-end had passed by and the ship proceeded to Aden — unfortunately with over 40% of the ship's company suffering with tummy upsets, possibly due to the Karachi water.

H.M.S. "Loch Alvie" was at Aden when the ship arrived but a few hours later she proceeded on her way home, avoiding a sandstorm which very quickly developed and just as quickly subsided, but "Loch Fada" emerged from it covered with sand, This delayed shifting berth for a while because visibility was nil but it 'didn't delay the ship's company going

ashore to continue bargaining with the tradesmen as they had done back in December. Altogether it was a quiet ten days in Aden this time, everyone having respite from the social rounds.

Departure in early July was rather hasty on the receipt of a signal from Admiralty, stating that the S.S. "Corabank" was in distress, and a signal from the Commander-in-Chief ordering the ship to go to her assistance. So, with all libertymen back on board, despite a rope becoming entwined around the Motor boat's screw, steam was raised and shortly after midnight "Loch Fada" set course for Cape Guardafui, the most easterly tip of Africa. Several attempts were made to establish contact with the "Corabank" by radio but not with the ship had rounded Cape Guardafui was contact made — and then only through the S.S. "Stratheden". She was now in a position to the east of the island of Socotra, so "Loch Fada" altered course for this new position and information was received that the Royal Fleet Auxiliary "Wave Sovereign" had been diverted from the Arabian Sea and directed to rendezvous with her. Direct contact was eventually made with "Corabank" when she had only 12 hours fuel remaining and because she was without radar and gyro, the distressed ship agreed that "Loch Fada" should lead her to a night anchorage, Bandar Delaisha, recommended as being the best in Socotra during the South West monsoon. Now with only



"Wave Sovereign" refuelling "Corabank"

ten tons of fuel left, the "Corabank" remained at anchor until the arrival of the R.F.A., which skilfully went alongside her and transferred the much required fuel. On the completion of this, all three ships then went their separate ways, each under her own steam.

The way of "Loch Fada" now led to the Persian Gulf and on Friday, July 13th, the ship's second spell in the Gulf began with a week in Bahrain secured to a buoy alongside "Loch Fyne". At least there was one compensation ; "Loch Fada" had been on the station longer than any ship and was the next to go home. A wonderful thought too in view of the tremendous heat and uncomfortable humidity which affected everyone without exception.

Fao and Basrah, up the Shatt-al-Arab, were the first two places to be visited, Fao proving quite enjoyable with hospitality being extended to the ship by the Port Club and the Basrah Petroleum Company, whose oiling jetties are situated there. In a game against the B.P.C., the cricket team

recorded their first win since Ceylon, whilst at Basrah itself, some 60 mile= upstream, this same cricket team went even further by winning two of the three matches played. The Iraqis had now taken over most of the R.A.F. camp, under the terms of the transfer of bases to Iraq, and only a handful of R.A.F. personnel remained. The swimming pool was used frequently both for swimming and water polo, while a dance at the Missions to Seamen proved most enjoyable. The temperature away from the open sea, however, was very high, due to the hot winds blowing in from the desert, and it was not surprising that the ship's company were glad to leave.

Back in Bahrein in August, the programme for the month was to have consisted of visits to small islands in the south-eastern part of the Gulf. While "Loch Fyne" went to Kuwait, "Loch Fada", however, had to stand by in Bahrein for possible disturbances, the threat of a strike and consequent revolt facing the ruler. But the shin did finally get away, this danger being averted, and the amended programme was in two parts. The first part consisted of a call on the Bahrein Pearl Fishing Fleet, where a certain amount of assistance was rendered to 3 of the 65 dhows; visits to the islands of Bu Musa and Tunb. and to the familiar Khor Kuwai, where the work of dismantling parts of the old base and embarking it for shipment to Bahrein, was carried out ; and three days were spent near and in Umm Said. awaiting disturbances ashore which were anticipated to break out, in sympathy with the Egyptian action over the Suez Canal and, when there was the danger of these taking place, sending two Landing Parties to protect British life and property from the striking Arabs. "Loch Fada" returned to Bahrein unscathed and intact, the "Loch Insj," coming alongside, and was soon away again on the second part of the programme. This began with another visit to Umm Said, and continued with visits to islands, sheikhdoms and anchorages on the Trucial Coast, carrying out bombardment practice in the vicinity of Jazirat Yas and, on visiting Jazirat Dalma, being presented with a goat, which was killed by the Somalis, when the shin returned to Bahrein.

Less than a month was now left of "Loch Fada's" time in the Gulf and at this stage excitement and speculation were aroused over the Suez Canal crisis. Before the Paying-off Pennant was hoisted and the bows turned towards the first stage of the voyage home, there were three parts to the September programme to be completed. The first was another "Island Cruise", which included a visit to Jazirat Das, where there was a noticeable change taking place, preparatory to the setting up of oil installations. Secondly, Basra was revisited. The nights were really cold, with temperatures in the 70's, and blankets had to be brought out of reserve. The third part was carried out, after "fond farewells" had been said to Bahrein, at Khor Kuwai where the final stages of the transfer were effected ; and the "Loch Killisport" having completed the long voyage around Africa, arrived, formerly relieving the "Loch Fada".

It was a happy day when the "Loch Fada" left the Khor for the last time. She had thus ended her Persian Gulf Service as she had begun it with a visit to Khor Kuwai; and it may seem a little odd that this had been one of the most popular places visited. In a very short time, the shin was in the Gulf of Oman, and the Arabian Sea, heading for home. The long journey, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, with over forty days at sea, had begun, and Mombasa and Simonstown were being awaited with expectation. The eager expectation with which Portsmouth and HOME were being looked forward to. however, nothing could match.

KHOR! WHAT A LIFE!

All is still within the Khor,
Save for Jack's quite gentle snore.
But alas, this peace won't last,
The Tannoy is about to blast.
The duty P.O. Rounds a-making,
Giving all the lads a shaking.
Up they stagger from below,
Eyes all bleary, movements slow.
Buffer now is reminiscing,
Of the days when none were missing,
But alas, ashore last night,
Four 'Quarterdeck' were very tight.
Amongst the Foe'sle lines is rancour,
For when last they dropped the anchor,
Foc'sle lost some of their crowd,
Who now play harps upon a cloud.
Now a hush begins its reign,
As hands are detailed once again,
Clean and polish, sweep and brush,
No one seems to tear or rush,
As "Guard and Steerage" time draws near,
Jack in his way makes it quite clear.
That now is time when he must slink,
Away to 'lash' and bathroom sink,
The upper deck is now quite bare,
Where are the hands who once were there?
The O.O.D. suspicious grown,
Demands to know where hands have flown.
But he should know the way of Jack,
Who always grabs a chance to slack.
So my friends with pretended zest,
Jack has won another rest,
And reclines with eyes shut tight,
Thinks of when in dawn's weak light,
He stumbled up with feeble hand,
To grab a broom by lower band.

POST BAG.

A thousand years ago, the carrying of messages was a hazardous business and, if the tiding were bad, the poor messenger was often slain on the spot. Conditions of course are vastly improved today, but even so, the postman's job on board ship in foreign parts, is not all that enviable — if he *does* fail to deliver long awaited letters, there are still many who would willingly slay him!

His job is far from easy too. He has to collect, weigh, sort and stamp the letters on board, and then tramp ashore in all weathers to dispatch them. Whilst collecting bags of incoming mail, and important messages, he even makes purchases from the shops ashore for those who either cannot or have forgotten to do so. Back on board again, he sorts out the mail and delivers it, receiving the customary mixed greetings as he does so, and never a day passes without his receiving the blame for something or other.

Foreign currency is another of his problems. It changes so rapidly during an East Indies and Persian Gulf commission that much to his consternation he is now in possession of so many different coinages that only an Exchange Bank can solve his dilemma.

His journeyings ashore have resulted in the dispatch by air of 30,000 letters and 150 parcels; and the delivery of 24,000 letters and 200 parcels to the ship in addition to the receipt of 85 bags of mail by the slower sea route. Whatever emotions his appearance evokes, at 'Mail call', a vote of thanks should go to Leading Seaman Evans, our Postman.

THE FORECASTLE DIVISION



Although on commissioning, the Division had a complement of 25 ratings, the Divisional Officer, who is also the T.A.S. Officer, has the ranks swelled by Junior Seamen who have been rated up.

At first the forecastle part of ship had a somewhat dilapidated appearance, reminders of the period spent in Dockyard hands, and a great deal of time and energy were devoted to the battle against rust, usually in the most inaccessible corners, whilst experiments were made with the new plastic paint. Supervision of the work was often left to Leading Seaman Batchelor (now a Petty Officer), owing to the 'Captain of the Top' — P.O. Carter — being engaged in Asdic work. Besides these menial tasks, the forecastlemen were busily engaged in becoming proficient in their many technical departments, having representatives in the Asdic, Underwater Weapon, Gunnery and Radar Plot branches, not to mention Diving and other pursuits.

When at sea, in addition to these activities, the seamanship evolutions peculiar to this part of the ship had to be exercised until they became like second nature. These, to mention a few, included working anchors and cables, rigging light and heavy jackstays for transferring stores and personnel and fuelling at sea. With all this hard work being conscientiously carried out, by the time the work-up period was completed to everyone's satisfaction, all were pleased to have leave for a few days relaxation.

After leave, while working with other ships of the Home Fleet, the T.A.S. ratings were kept busy, always seeming to be closed up carrying out exercises with a variety of targets from submarines to wrecks. The Gunnery ratings, needless to say, also improved their point of aim, and the Underwater Weapons ratings delighted everyone by operating the squid most efficiently. Although the Radar Plot ratings have been involved in these exercises, their main function in peacetime is to assist in the navigation of the ship in all weathers. While these events were taking place, the tussle with rust and corrosion was still being carried on with great success : in fact the part of ship was looking much cleaner.

During the passage to Bahrein, work and exercises continued and most of the Division experienced sea-sickness during the rough weather-forgotten

of course, at each port of call. In the Persian Gulf, find sand carried in the wind, was a new enemy to combat, the paintwork continually being cleaned to remove it before it could do any further damage. However, on the lighter side of life, the tug-o'-war team (ably anchored by A.B. Palmer!) defeated the Electricians and then sportingly shared their prizes (cans of beer) with the losers. In the interpart soccer league, the Divisional team finished in third position, a very creditable performance.

Our visit to the Seychelles was most interesting and many of the division saw a great deal of Archbishop Makarios during the passage. They rigged canvas screens to reserve a section of the upper deck for him and his compatriots, and never failed to receive a polite greeting from him each morning.

At Colombo, while in dry dock, many hours were spent paint spraying the messdecks and passages, but welcome refreshments were obtained at the B.S.S.I., the shore accommodation. Living ashore was a pleasant change, but the ordeal of passing the Fish Market twice daily in the dockyard bus, will long be remembered, and when the time came almost everyone was glad to be back on board.

Trincomalee was a perfect setting for sport and many played in ship's teams or in interpart games. Other attractions were the organised visits to places of interest and many from the division forgot all about cleaning paintwork and exercises to enjoy them and improve their general knowledge. This they did quite successfully as was proved by the correct answers given during quiz programmes held on board later in the commission.

Our next cruise, calling at Indian and Pakistan ports, was uneventful except perhaps for the rough weather encountered and the vast amount of entertainment. While at Aden, there was a change in Divisional Petty Officer. The reason for this was that our veteran Buffer. C.P.O. Hart, who celebrated his 50th birthday on board, had to return to U.K. on medical grounds. P.O. Carter became Chief Bo'sun's Mate and P.O. Judge took over the Forecastle. The whole division again excelled themselves in their quest for 'rabbits' ashore in this free port. But now to more serious matters because back in the Gulf, some of our ratings had to take part in a landing at Umm Said to assist in preventing anticipated riots by the Arabs who supported the Egyptian seizure of the Suez Canal.

We now await patiently and perspiringly the day when the ship arrives in the United Kingdom once again and our thoughts dwell on Christmas at home.

TIME MARCHES ON.

Turning sad eyes up above him,
Sees the object up so high;
Once this mountain was a molehill,
Now it reaches to the sky.
Thinking of the days gone past him,
And his friends already fled,
Once again he looks above him,
And he shakes his aged head.
Soon he knows he must go onward,
So he inflates his bony chest
Then again he reaches upwards,
Stretches out with better zest.
Using all the power within him,
Up he reaches fairly quick,
Back is aching, bones are creaking,
But "Bufs" at last is in his 'mick'!