

Held down by a cloud base of less than a thousand feet, with the top 7000 feet hidden, Tristan da Cunha seemed rather sinister. The inhabitants did nothing to alleviate this feeling, standing in small groups watching us land two parties ashore. In fact they were most hospitable, and who would wave at six in the morning anyway?

We were able to help by running mail for a couple of fishing boats lying offshore and were given some excellent crayfish for our pains.

We went camping in a forestry reserve at Wemmershoek—about 60 miles from Simonstown.

The landrover provided the ground link and found an excellent site near a small dam. It was also vital for logistic support too—Leiberstein at 5/- a gallon from a hotel at Franschoek. We declined the offer to 'uth boyth' to 'Come up to my houth for a dwink' with the bartender.

We worked off the wine with a quick foot-slog up 2000 feet of mountain at sunrise, to look for an exposure meter which had been dropped photographing sunset the previous evening.

The T.V. Mast at Mauritius was the event of the commission and the accompanying article, reprinted from *Flight Deck*, absolves me from saying more, except that we slept for two days solid on return.

Gan was remarkable only because we delayed the ship from sailing for 12 hours awaiting a spare to repair the damage caused by a bowser being in collision with one of the rotor blades.



The Konan Maru stranded

At each visit to Singapore, with the ship alongside for periods of about three weeks, we have disembarked to H.M.S. *Butlin's*, I mean *Simbang*, each time to be able to carry on maintenance and flying, without interfering with the ship's routine.

We split the May visit with a week with the R.M.A.F. at Kuala Lumpur. We went to pick up some tips on jungle flying and found out how little we knew. We learned how to land in clearings and something of the mysteries of jungle navigation. Unfortunately we brought our crewman back with his leg in plaster and he was promptly flown back to U.K.—one of the few bachelors in the flight and the only member who did not want to leave the Singapore area. Such is life.

Our only 'moment' at sea was the day when we found an abandoned Japanese whale catcher, stranded on the Royal Captain's reef. Unfortunately it was not possible to effect the salvage and we regretfully waved goodbye to the odd pint of beer at sunset.

You can prove anything with records, but the four engines we have had through our hands have done a combined total of over 600 million revolutions at a cost of about £200,000. We have erected a T.V. mast, carried about 30 tons of assorted stores, retrieved one diver and rescued two aircrew.

Measuring distance flown is much more difficult as we seem to spend so much time getting nowhere but I reckon we must be well over the 1000 passenger mile mark. We cannot claim to have carried royalty but have transported all available V.I.P.s and you should have seen the face of the Captain of *Tiger* when he found his ship had sailed from the jetty at Punta Arenas!

## To Mauritius—A Mast

Mauritius is a mountainous island about thirty miles in diameter where, in December 1964, one of the burning political problems was television. The transmitter and two repeater masts and the studios had been completed during the year, but the erection of the third repeater mast on Jurancon Hill was the problem on the precipitous terrain. It was hot politically because its coverage area was to include the constituency of the Prime Minister, whose dictum was 'No T.V. until all can see'. Heads were likely to roll if moving pictures did not appear soon.

Someone in desperation mentioned helicopters and another *London's* visit and thus it was, that while decorating the ship for Christmas at Simonstown, we received a signal asking if the Flight could help with

the Wessex. It quoted the height and some weights and after checking in the data book, we replied that we could but try, but that it would be a bit marginal if the day was too hot and still.

The Contractors, clutching at any straw, cut all the bits in half without a murmur, and reduced the heaviest lift to 1650 lbs. At 1000 feet, the temperature was expected to be 22° C. and an average wind of 12 to 15 knots was forecast. 'Easy' we said, 'we are in the commando role anyway'. Ignorance is Bliss!

Full of confidence on Monday 4th January, we rushed ashore from 120 miles out, hit the island first shot, hopped off on a quick reconnaissance sortie with the Chief Engineer of M.B.C. and parked the Wessex for the night on the hard standing at Plaisance.

We were fielded by our manager for the next few days, Lieutenant Commander Armstrong of H.M.S. *Mauritius*, and taken for a planning conference with the Contractors and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation at 'H.M.S.'

We were told that the mast would be 143 feet high tapering from fifteen feet square at the base to eighteen inches at the top. It was in nine sections of which they would erect the lowest three and we, the top six. These weighed between 1650 and 1000 lbs. So as to avoid statically charging the spidermen, we asked for light chain, tailed with rope, to be fitted on each piece for earthing and a twenty foot piece of rope to be fastened to each leg to assist with the man-handling of the sections.

Where the sections were to butt together there were sixteen butt-straps, two welded to the inside and two to the outside of each angle-iron leg. Thus eight narrow slots to be engaged at each mating.

We raised our eye-brows at this and requested a practice lift. Just as well, because even with a tree alongside to watch for a hovering reference, it would not fit together. We got them to remove the inner butt-straps and spread the outer ones, so the effect was now of fitting a half ton box into its lid with a tolerance of about three inches as the sections met.

An *Avtur* bowser was promised by Shell and came to the forward landing area at Souillac whenever we appeared there. Fuel would otherwise have been a dreadful problem of drums and pumps and chamois leather. Hats off to Shell for a magnificent service and in particular to M. Pitois, the Mauritian representative.

The Contractors had promised that they would be ready for us at first light on Wednesday, but it was not until 1500 on Thursday that we got the green light for the first lift—frustrating, as we had turned out at 0430 to get the aircraft to Souillac by 0600. It did give us a

chance though, while waiting, to have a full dress rehearsal with the spidermen, our crewman P.O. Anning, who was to be up with them and pass hand signals, Lieutenant Walsh, who in turn was to pass on instructions by 634 radio, and the pilots, Lieutenant Stock and me.

It worked—at Souillac.

It was not so easy up on Jurancon, though. For a start there were no trees to hover alongside. Secondly, the mast was on such precipitous ground that the radio altimeter was useless, and thirdly, the resultant updraught could reduce our power requirements to less than 50% at times in the slightly above average wind. Thus it was not altogether surprising that the first attempt had to be abandoned forty-five minutes later for refuelling after four very near misses.

We were getting a bit despondent after two more near misses on the second attempt when suddenly 'Slip, Slip, Slip' and it was on, and Walsh, being the handiest, went down under a shower of Gallic embraces

Once the butt-straps had been bolted, Anning and the spidermen moved up to the top for the next section holed out this time by Stock in forty minutes. Unfortunately, the 634 failed when on the point of success with the sixth section and I had to return with it and finish for the day. It was nearly sunset anyway.



Sections 4 and 5 are being prepared for practice lift

Meanwhile a cyclone had been reported N.E. of the island and we had been warned that we might be recalled to the ship at dusk. Added Drama. All the ground crew and accoutrements that could be spared had to be sent back on board by 1700 at which time the ship sailed out to an anchorage in Port Louis roads. Thank goodness by dusk the cyclone Freda was in a much less threatening position and we were allowed to remain ashore again at Plaisance overnight.

The wind had increased to thirty to thirty-five knots by Friday morning and the updraught occasionally left us almost in autorotation over the mast. Nevertheless each of us had put on another section by 1100, leaving only two to go. These weighed only 2200 lbs. together and we reckoned the lift would be easy.

'More haste, less speed' they say and 'they' are quite right.

The riggers who by now were sharing a four foot square working space with P.O. Anning, could not control such a heavy weight in that wind and I had to take it back to be bisected. Once done we soon completed the erection, took three loads of assorted ironmongery up to the site and finished by putting the red obstruction light on the top.

When we could finally break away from the embraces of the Constructors, we collected up the remains of our bits and baggage, took a final top-up from M. Pitois and rejoined the ship underway north of the island, tired, happy and somewhat wiser—consider threading a needle blindfold by voice radio control.

In four days, we had flown thirty sorties totalling nearly fifteen hours and besides erecting the mast, flew His Excellency the Governor, four Ministers, six Departmental Heads and representatives of the press and television round the Island and several of the engineers had hitched lifts up or down the hill.

Mauritius had never seen a helicopter before, let alone a fairly large one doing a popular job. So besides the training value to the Flight, Naval and indeed British prestige has taken a very considerable boost—well worth the hours spent.

If only we could have stayed on to celebrate . . .

*Top left*-The manual way before the advent of helicopters

*Top right*- Manoeuvring the first section into place

*Bottom left*-The moment of the commission—holing out the first section

*Bottom right*-The finishing touch—putting the obstruction lights on top





Visit to rubber factory, Kuala Lumpur



Trishaw

# Singapore

Tiger Balm Gardens



# Bangkok

Our visit to the capital of Thailand in March was a new experience for most of us. Our main function there was to act as a host ship for Admiral Begg, then Commander-in-Chief, Far East.

In this capacity we had the honour of showing the ship to the King and his very beautiful Queen Sirikit. Some of the exotic mystery of Thailand accompanied their Majesties, even though they are quite young and lively themselves. In the entourage one attendant carried the King's cigarette box; another toted a golden umbrella for the Queen.

The city itself was a mixture of the ancient and the modern. Thousands of elaborate Buddhist temples gave witness to a religion older than Christianity, whereas fine new hotels and office buildings sprouted everywhere.

Our sightseers and shutterbugs had a splendid time. The temples gave wonderful opportunities to snap happily. The emerald Buddha, the reclining Buddha (with mother-of-pearl feet), the snake farm and the Temple of the Dawn were all close at hand. Further afield some of our intrepid and more active members visited the early morning floating market, while others went by bus to the River Kwai and to the ancient capital of Ayuthya.

Shopping was expensive but the odd matelot who had any cash after Hong Kong was tempted by the genuine Thai silk and the bronze-ware.

Not least of all the night-life was engagingly care-free and energetic. The Sukhumvity Road at night was a sight that will be remembered for a long time.

Bangkok was a good run ashore, mate!

*Top—Buddhist images maintained by private families*

*Bottom right—The Temple of Dawn*

*Bottom left—One of the many Wats in Bangkok*







Typical Siamese Architecture

Gold Buddha

Haggling for your day's rations

Floating market



## The Royal Visit

Traditional dress through the ages



# Hong Kong

## This Golden Land

By ABLE SEAMAN D. BRADFORD

Many thousands of years ago there was a land called Cathay; this was a land where people lived and worked, a land of trade and prosperity, where people worshipped many gods and religions. Foreigners from many parts of the new world came by ships across the waters to trade, explore and to live with these people of Cathay. Soon it was realised that here was a prosperity where a new world could be united with the old world of Cathay. Many merchant ships, corvettes and men of war came to trade, to learn, to wonder at this wonderful race of people. They were amazed to find that the people of Cathay were humble and hardworking. They went away from this land of enchantment where peasants worked in paddy fields growing rice, and wondered at the religion and the dragon dances, they went in awe of the flying fire that came out of the ends of tubes, later to be known as fireworks, which the people of Cathay had invented.

Cathay prospered and was soon to be known as China. This land was split up into several states and after many bloody battles, wars and uneasiness, there rose an island called Hong Kong. Hong Kong was leased to Great Britain a hundred years ago and it became a British colony, where ships could come and go, trade and depart to the world beyond.

After two world wars and unrest we see Hong Kong today as a great nation where fishing is the important trade. You can enter Hong Kong by either land, sea or air. As a tourist you can fly by modern jets and see the city from the air; by sea you sail by Junk Bay upriver with tall skyscrapers and warehouses lining the way into the very heart of the city. Fishing junks and sampans will either be putting out to sea or be tied up alongside merchant ships that are anchored in the harbour itself.

On the other side of Hong Kong we have the city of Kowloon with its teeming thousands, and beyond Kowloon a range of high barren mountains which is known as the New Territories. Crossing the water from Kowloon to Hong Kong we travel by ferry boat which takes only a matter of minutes.

Many nationalities are here in Hong Kong including many thousands of refugees from across the border. As you look up onto the hillside past Wanchai you can see the little shacks and tin huts of the refugees, where a single family of twenty might live huddled up in one room,





where water has to be fetched by bucket from across the other side of the hill. The airport and runway jut out into the sea and ships pass by the end of it.

What has Hong Kong to offer to a sailor? Although many of us have been around the globe, there is nothing finer in this beautiful world than Hong Kong which caters for every taste. Whether you are a tourist or a sailor you will learn to love this city of enchantment, with its night life and shopping centres. Here you can buy anything from a golden carved statue to a pet monkey.

As you leave the ship, you walk through the dockyard past North Arm Gate and out into the city; if you wish to visit theatres and the more expensive night clubs you turn right and head for the centre of town. The skyscrapers loom up to the sky and if you can afford it there is the Hong Kong Hilton catering for the many American tourists. The Peak railway can be seen and you can ride up to the top and overlook Hong Kong and Kowloon from about thirteen hundred feet; it is a beautiful sight to see the city the way it should be seen. The other side of the city we have Causeway Bay with its lovely Green Island and the gay, busy village of Aberdeen, where junks and sampans are tied up in their hundreds.

Most sailors prefer to visit Wanchai where, amongst the many attractions, there is the Royal Navy's own China Fleet Club which is very well known and you will find that Jack likes to drink Tiger beer. At a reasonable price the food is very good and, for a couple of dollars, you may book a cabin to spend the night. Then there are the famous night clubs where you will find sailors, after eleven o'clock, who like to dance with a pretty hostess or drink quietly by themselves.

The shops are known the world over and you can get a suit made in twenty-four hours or you can buy silks and brocades, watches and music boxes. I could go on for many hours filling up page after page about this golden land, but as the sun sinks down over the horizon and blackens the day into night, I shall say goodbye to this land of excitement and splendour—this golden land called Hong Kong.

*Top left-Sampan*

*Top right-Street scene*

*Bottom-London, Tamar and Kowloon*



## The Supply Department

Like other departments, we also began in little wooden huts at Wallsend, but not before the Gunnery Officer had first had several losing bouts with K.S.P. who, when asked for some stationery, replied that it was to be demanded on form S.134. When asked for one of these with which to demand stationery, K.S.P. adamantly refused to supply on the grounds that the demand was not on form S.134. In those days C.P.O.S.A. Roberts had to climb 98 steps to get to his stores; now he goes down 34 and up 46 to see Commander (S).

There duly came the day when truckloads of stores arrived and the flight deck was covered with provisions : the contractors chose provisioning day to put the lift out of action. Quiet, that man, who muttered something about precedent!

We managed to get to Portsmouth without noticeably running out of anything, except in the Captain's Office where they ran out of time to cope with the bump. At Portsmouth, Commander (S) thought for one minute he had found how to make money, when the G.P.O. coin boxes started giving out more than was put in.

We worked up at Portland, where the provision lift went down under its own steam and the ship's company went ashore for stew (Dishex).

Before leaving for South America we said goodbye to the first Captain's Secretary, Lieutenant Stewart, whose ability (?) with a paint brush and his knowledge of form (not forms) were reputed to double his pay.

Bermuda, Texas and South America brought their various problems; the Chief Cook had several, the logisticians (who knew we carried them?) grew squint-eyed looking at their crystal balls, the cash handlers achieved wrangler standard in money changing, (seventeen changes in as many weeks): this is the only other statistic in this article—does anyone really want to know how much we drank or how far all the sausages eaten would stretch if placed end to end?

Who didn't taste the Chief Cook's special custard when we crossed the line? It's a pity he didn't try sticking his galley tiles down with it. At Punta del Este the Butcher learned what a Giant T-bone steak was.

Life in the Far East was complicated. The dollar seemed to have a different value every pay day; an inspection made us look to our rabbits in the storerooms and brought forth a lot of hard work cheerfully done; the lift took several holidays, even more than Singapore dockyard which was always closed for Hari Raya something or other. Stores came in mainly at sea, each occasion prompting the Naval Stores Chief to say,

yet again, that he had never known anything like it, and when first a new D.S.O. came and then a new Commander (S) one could almost say that life really was just one damned thing after another.

Through all this the Cooks cooked, the only people in the ship whose work was inspected by every member of the ship's company three times a day. Their reward: \* ! ?\*. And the stewards earned their weight in gold, or would have done if they had been paid overtime for cocktail parties.

The Writers and S.A.s coped bravely with the flow of bump and despite it, kept the ship paid, stocked and stored.

The Canteen Manager, never really knowing who was friend and who was foe, lived up to his firm's motto magnificently.

## The M(E) Department

by C.E.R.A. CRANE

'H.M.S. London will proceed on Final Acceptance Trials on 15th November 1963 at 0815.' These words were written, spoken and came true.

Before this happened there was the general hurry and scurry of getting everyone on board and vague mutterings of watchbills and duties, so much a part of life in the Engineroom Department. Most of us in the Department felt that at last the day was fast approaching when we would own it all and we began to look at the machinery in a new light and with some feeling of trepidation. During the building period the civilian contractors had had a nasty habit of telling us 'Naval spies' only so much and keeping the choicest bits secret. When on sea trials they would surround each machine with hordes of bodies to keep us at bay.

Came the 15th November and off to sea we went, loaded with <sup>our</sup> civilian hosts. The M.C.R. crowded with its usual 40 people ranging from the top brass of Wallsend Slipway and the Admiralty to boiler maker apprentices complete with 14lb. hammers and Junior M(E), complete with final run ashore hangovers.

With all the machinery spaces crowded with makers' representatives, the machinery trials went perfectly and the ship turned back to the Tyne. On the way up river the Captain signed the acceptance forms and the White Ensign was hoisted. A pipe was made and this could well have been 'Abandon Ship' as out of various holes poured forth the contractors and within 20 seconds all farewells had been said and the