

machinery spaces were empty except for us Naval bods on watch. The engines were rung to Stop and the ship anchored.

This gave us Engineers a chance to look around and what a sight it was. Commander (E) looking long (6'4") and forlorn, Senior (a Scot) looking even more forlorn, C.E.R.A. of the watch pale and worried, his two E.R.A.'s hot and worried, P.O.M.(E) of the watch alone with his black knobs and gauges, L.M.(E) wondering if the evaporators would still make water with only him in charge instead of the usual six to each set, and the three M.(E)s of the watch trying to remember where everything was and hoping that Bert or Joe would somehow appear out of the bilges.

For a long time all was silence and then someone had to say it — 'Ain't it lonely'. These words should never have been spoken, as into the M. C.R. came an M.(E) all hot and bothered. He'd taken a wrong turning and finding himself in the Boiler Box decided to make the best of a bad job and have a look around in case he got lost again. 'There's a great big hiss of steam down there' he said, 'and it's as hot as hell', . . . ' said Commander (E). Off went a heap of determined figures to investigate and found that 'hot as hell' was an understatement. 'It's a leak' said someone who hadn't switched his mind on. But where was the leak—an assortment of brooms, poles, wire and pieces of wood were passed down and poked into the general area of the heat—all to no avail, the leak could not be found.

'It must be a burst tube' and a general exodus at high speed from the Boiler Box. 'Shut down the boiler'—more panic — 'How do we do it?'. 'Put out the flames, cross connect, pump up the boiler, shut the stops. But we're in auto—switch to servo manual'.

The boiler is eventually shut down and we stop and think what to do next—do we go to sea on one boiler or do we start those big blow lamps back aft. No need to decide as the other boiler does it for us. 'Something's stuck' shouts the P.O.M.(E)—clouds of black smoke, boiler pressure dropping but everything going at full power—safety valves lifting, switch back to panic. . . . , it's impossible' said Commander (E). 'Start all Gas Turbo Alternators'. Enter the Electrical Department. 'Open J2, M2. Close M2, Id—synchronise out of phase and bang out go all the lights. The lights come on again and the boiler is under control—at least holding enough pressure to keep the steam alternators running. Safety valves lift again and now we find out that the makers forgot to tighten the setting lock nuts. A hot C.E.R.A. tightens nuts and fits the gags. All five generators running but 'Electrics' not sure where the load is. 'Put load on G.T.A.'s'—two immediately stop as they've run out of fuel. Get fuel supply pumps running again, restart the G.T.A.'s put them on load and everyone is happy again.

The Captain decides to go to sea. 'Start G.6's—Help, where are you, Sid?'. The G.6's start more by good luck than judgment and off to sea we go. Plenty of rough sea, no sleep and too many defects. 'What's this Chinese watchkeeping?—Watch on, Stop on'.

'The ship will anchor in Loch Ewe for the Ship's Company to become acquainted with the equipment'. Not a nut or bolt unknown by this time, and the defect list still getting bigger. We have a period at anchor to put things right and to get a night in bed. We find that our burst tube was a high pressure steam joint that the makers forgot to tighten. Complete repairs and change over boilers to set the safety valves.

Away to sea again — 'All's going well, we're on Shell'. We arrive at Devonport to refuel and to land a C.E.R.A. whose broken leg had decided to grow inside its plaster cast (the broken leg was sustained playing Rugby at Wallsend and not by being thrown out by an irate husband as was generally suspected). Then straight on to Portsmouth on Gas Turbines with everything working well—then out go all the G. 6's. The Devonport fuel found to be mainly water and dirt. Hurried stripping of water and changing of filters every hour. No sleep, and arrive at Pompey tired, dirty and with an even bigger defect list. Optimist says 'It can't go on like this'—how *wrong he was*.

Doctor says 'You shouldn't get into such a state; take this pill and you will be dead asleep in two hours'. How right he was.

The Weapons and Radio Department

by C.E.A. HILLIER

In 1963, Wallsend-on-Tyne saw a hard core of section officers and senior rates muster in the old wooden offices of Swan Hunter to set about the task of placing our part of ship in position. We settled our building problems with the overseers and the Drawing office, but there was much consternation when Sub Lieutenant Ransom discovered wave guides doing loop the loop, and when we brought the M.E.(L)'s into our camp.

November saw the arrival of the rest of the lads, E.M.s, R.E.M.s, E.A.s, R.E.A.s, O.A.s and A.B.s, tall, thin, short and fat, all to be thrown into the melting pot from which emerged the illustrious W.R.'s.

We were born.

Brand new, with more 'mods' than that to do, we slid gently down the Tyne, and within minutes of saying farewell to our 'Geordie' friends, our electronic outfit was in a pot mess, with our newly won ship rolling and pitching in Whitley Bay, and we began to think we were at Portland

six months premature. Within thirty minutes though, we were to prove who was 'boss' and we teetered around Scotland towards our home port Portsmouth.

The next few months were spent testing and tuning which appeared to have a contagious action; listed within these pages are many of us with new sons and daughters.

Although work we did, our time was broken with pleasant visits from H. R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh and H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester who cast keen eyes about them to admire our efforts to bring the ship into fighting trim for Portland, a name which sends shivers down the back of the stoutest matelot.

The fiends of F.O.S.T.'s staff descended upon us to attempt to prove that they knew more about our ship than its occupants. With much gusto they embarked on phases of smoking us out, putting boilers 'ten left' and generally setting many arduous tasks which were all to test our ingenuity, and quite honestly, although the detailed facts never came to light, I think we won.

With Portland behind us, we brought the ship to the quiet coastline of Wales. The scene was set to test our main function in life—Seaslug.

After ploughing many furrows in Cardigan Bay, our patience was tested to the full, the elements being the controlling factor. Eventually the clouds parted sufficiently to send our missiles skywards to do their worst.

With bounding success and congratulating words from the Captain, one-third of us set out on an arduous eight-hour journey over the Welsh mountains for a four day weekend. You know, that champagne did roll around in the back of the coach.

On leaving Portsmouth for the foreign leg of our commission, our first port of call was Devonport where we collected our outfit of missiles and one Chief Electrician; the latter we haven't fired, as we find him our finest weapon against the Routine office and Chief G.I. The latter, to use a gunnery term, has never been able to grab us by the 'lower band', regarding our jealously won Able rates.

Evolution must have its way though; we were all to become buffers in our right, having fifty per cent of the lower deck to clean, our junior rates strut around happily trailing brooms and wearing that smug look 'who says the Mi isn't the pride of the W.R. department?' If 'chippy' still wants to know where all the 'interior white' was used he'd better start looking W8's way.

Next stops were Bermuda, Houston and Panama. Later, many of us were to go through the undignified ceremony of crossing the line in the Pacific.

Besides successfully showing off our seacat system to the South Americans we made a fair impression ashore, too. Lieutenant Noakes led a stranded party ashore at Punta del Este in the finest naval tradition to the nearest bar to await a weather driven *London at sea*.

With our three month jolly around America and South Africa over, the sight of oscilloscopes and other test equipment being dragged up the hatch from the E.M.R. to the Operations Room saw us back into top gear.

On entering Singapore harbour, the duty hands were ready to sweep the jetty alongside No. 6 berth and the floodlighting party unceremoniously dragged the lighting circuits onto the upper deck.

Individually, the department has provided talent for the ship's group, the football and cricket elevens, and the swimming gala where we finished one point behind the engineers (who are used to swimming around in the 'oggin).

To date, the department has seen the coming and going of twelve section officers but the old firm of Noakes and Ransom still ploughs on, the former having the reputation (though not literally) of being the oldest officer on board.

We have had our fair share of advancements and without doubt, the electrical scope within the ship provides a fine practical background for our younger members, although E.M. Geddis still tries to prove he's immune to 440 Volts.

The Communications Department

by LRO(T) HULBERT

Leading our gallant staff is two and a half megs Mike Saunders, with his three sheriffs, Mad Meterband McDonald, Twisted Tactical Taff, and Dirty Diode Davis. Next follow the three deputies, Bent Bandwidth Baird, Mitch the UHF Kid, and 'One sweep and I'll fill yer full of emissions' Jeff. This completes the top half of our band, following them we have twelve hired henchmen, keeping in check thirty two of the worst outlaws this side of Cathode Gulch. What staff changes we have had, occurred earlier in the commission. Lt. Cdr. Gilchrist left us through sickness, and Lt. Schofield joined as his temporary relief, until our permanent and present SCO joined in the form of Lt. Cdr. Saunders. CRS Strong left us in February for civvy street, in which we wish him all the best for the future, his relief being CRS McDonald. 'Mac' must have been well 'in' at Mercury, as he was down to fly home with the first phase before he even joined the ship. Our first RS, RS Ireland was

elevated to CRS and presented with the Devonshire: he was relieved by RS Hamlett from ASWE. Unfortunately the latter had to leave through sickness, and so our present RS joined in the form of The UHF Kid.

Now for the department in general, it is our policy to intermix the General, Tactical and Warfare subdivisions as much as possible, mainly for the benefit of our 'U's. Our prospective leaders enjoyed a quiet few months in Kranji W/T, and a couple of them were actually flown up to Bangkok to join us, this being the highlight of their course. What they did bring back with them, was some rather amusing tales of Bells. It seems that one enterprising 'W' rating (could it have been anyone else) thought that two '*Dings*' equalled a '*Dong*' and proceeded to ring sixteen bells, whilst another bright 'spark' rang one bell too many, and so erased it with eight bells (in the wireless world eight dits means erase and start again) and started again! Still, the fire party needed an exercise.

Some of you may probably remember the newspaper that we used to publish nightly; the success of this rested mainly with CRS Strong whose idea it was. Our daily routine was to tune into news broadcasts at odd hours of the day, collect as much as possible, edit it, add a sports coverage, cartoons, competitions, advertisements, and out of a sea of paper would emerge your news sheet. Our sea inspection was a busy period for us; we had portables in the most unlikely places, all the signal flags were hoisted at one period, and the flagdeck crew made an excellent replica of the Tokyo Shipping Company flag, which we flew for some time. A traffic jam was also caused outside the MCO, when the pipe 'Youngest R.O. to the Bridge' was made, and by all accounts the CRS is still struggling gallantly to find the Bridge.

3D Mess may not conjure up new ideas for the 'Home Planning' magazine in compact living, but to us it has meant 'home', and to this end we have tried to make it as pleasant a place as possible to come off watch to. We can well remember the days in the U.K. when any visiting VIP who wanted to see a typical messdeck was automatically taken down there, a fact of which we are very proud.

It is hard to say where the department first became nautically minded, it probably originated one sunny day on the forecastle, when we were bringing the ship alongside, assisted by the occasional seaman—or possibly it was the salty tongue of Lt. Ogilvy, with such terms as 'double up and belay', 'avast heaving', etc. utterly alien to our mole-like existence of wavelengths and fluorescent lighting. But whatever it was, the feeling was there, and so our staff started off on a series of banyans that would surely have deterred any Indonesians had we met any. Most afternoons in Singapore found a motley shower of tastelessly dressed fools mustered beneath the first motor boat, praying to the clouds to go away, which they inevitably failed to do. After the first few looks of utter disbelief

the OOW's got quite used to seeing our merry band mustered for a banyan.

We can all remember the first occasion when we arrived back alongside the ship, and saw the look of complete joy on Lt. Griffiths' face because we had actually brought the boat back with us. These became quite popular, and often we had to turn bods away, because of the lack of boats. Pulau Ubin and Pulau Seletar became our main targets, with the occasional RAS at the Hong Kong and Seacoast bars. On one occasion we had the use of a dockyard diesel launch, which provided the space for as many bods as possible. This was a great success, and so carried away was Jock Milne, that on reaching our selected beach, he heaved the anchor overboard with gay abandon, unfortunately it wasn't attached to anything at the time. But never mind, the dockyard didn't miss it. Our beach cuisine improved each time, and I think we all agree that 'Bungy's' steaks were delicious. We did have a run of bad luck though, when we broke down three times on the trot, the last time being conveniently near the Air Force base at Seletar, where we were entertained at their Yacht Club until our tow arrived. Some of us enjoyed three days in an M.F.V., when we based ourselves in Keppel Harbour, and went out to the islands to the west of Singapore each day. The majority of the time was spent water-skiing, fishing and underwater swimming off coral reefs, though we did 'capture' a flag from the top of a deserted island, which we like to think was Indonesian.

Electronic Warfare

Since the ship commissioned in November 1963, the E.W. team has been kept fairly active wherever the ship has been. The first test for us was Portland, where we were subjected to air, surface and subsurface attacks. With more than just luck we came through on top. The equipment in the E.W. office being new and virtually unproven has stood up to the strains imposed upon it and the results obtained are still good enough to warrant our playing a major part in every exercise concerning the ship so far.

On Wednesday 28th April the sub-department led by the S.C.O. trooped off to RAF *Tengah* for a look at Bomber Commands 'V' Bomber force, in the shape of the ageing but still formidable Victor iA's now relegated to conventional bombing duties.

It has been the good fortune of the department on several occasions to exercise against these highly sophisticated aircraft. We had a good run down on the aircraft from their RAF crews, and then scrambled through the Victors themselves, which, perhaps amazingly were still complete and in working order when we left despite our keen eyed rabbit hunters—anyone want a gyro-compass?

The Wreck of the *Sirius* 1810 and 1965

by LIEUTENANT NEILSON

One blustery evening just 155 years ago, four of His Britannic Majesty's Ships appeared off the reef at the entrance to the open bay which is called Grande Port on the S.E. side of the island of Mauritius. The island was held at the time by the French, and this small British squadron had been sent out to silence the guns of the heavy fortress and capture the ships lying at anchor close inside, thereafter accepting the surrender of the island and proclaiming another British Colony.

It was so close to nightfall that the British ships decided to anchor outside, thus forfeiting the element of surprise but at least being sure of daylight to negotiate the tricky channel through the reef and into the harbour. The wind was steady from the East and they were confident that they would still have the weather gauge the following morning.

During the night two very important things happened. The French, leaving their ships at anchor took the boats and rowed out to the buoys which marked the narrow channel. They shifted them, and those they could not move, they cut adrift. On board the senior British ship the Captain was unfortunate enough to shoot himself, not mortally, but through the neck, while loading his pistol in preparation for the fray. Well strapped up, but not a little shaken by his nocturnal misfortune he gave the order to weigh at daylight. The ships beat to quarters and passed through the reef in full sail. So far everything was going according to plan, and the French had clearly not left their women-folk to return on board, as they remained firmly at anchor at the head of the bay.

Suddenly the leading ship struck a coral shelf with enormous force; the next astern in avoiding her was fortunate enough to keep to the real channel but on trying to make the next buoy, now misplaced, also went aground. The *Sirius* was third, and though now wise to the Frenchmen's trick was not able to reduce sail in time to prevent herself being swept onto the next reef. She stuck firm but like the first two, was still outside the range of the shore batteries. The French had been cunning but not cunning enough. It now became imperative to refloat at least one of the first two ships as they carried the most guns. The *Sirius* would have to be abandoned, and her anchor used to try and kedge the others off. Shots from the fortress were falling close by as the crew rowed the vast anchor across. The remainder removed everything of value including all weapons, finally laying a gunpowder trail to both magazines. With a deafening roar she was blown in two and sank.

In the meantime the fourth ship had managed to negotiate the channel and was under fire from the shore. Incredulous the Frenchmen prepared for action and hoisted sail. They were too late. One pass by the British ship was enough. Her guns slung chain shot across the French line and in a few minutes masts, spars and rigging were strewn across their decks. She turned to come back, disregarding the heavy shore battery, and one by one she cut the ships from their cable. They drifted helplessly onto the lee shore and unable to offer any defence, they surrendered. The last battle of Grande Port was over.

On the 7th January, 1965, a party of four ship's divers left for a day's diving on the wreck of H.M.S. *Sirius*, which had been located, almost by chance, only two months before.

The stern lies in ninety feet of water, and has overturned completely showing the copper sheeting on the hull. The forward end lies in sixty-five feet of water and seemed to have been splayed out by the explosion.

On descending to the wreck, many features were recognisable : the team soon discovered that there were plenty of souvenirs to be found. Two large cannon stuck gauntly in the air (sorry water). A few minutes digging in a thin layer of sand produced plenty of 8" copper nails, copper sheeting, 12" rivets and burnt timbers. Many broken Port bottles were also found. The most remarkable feature of our discoveries was the Pussers' broad arrow which marked each of the large nails. How on earth do we get them through Pompey Dockyard?

The trigger guard and breech of a musket was the most interesting find of the day. This was sent to the local Museum, from which a team of experts are trying to build up a picture of the remains, and we achieved a mention in the local press. All weapons, you will recall, were reputed to have been removed before scuttling—why then this musket? . . .

The Wreck of the Konan Maru

Typhoon? Piracy? Or dare it be whispered, just bad navigation? Whatever it was, on 11th May, while *London* was on her way back to Singapore after the incident of the F.F.O. pump off Subic, our helicopter, out on a training flight, found the Japanese whale catcher *Konan Maru* stranded on the romantic sounding Royal Captain's Shoal (09°03' N 117°39' E).

As the photograph shows, this 600 ton vessel was driven hard up onto the coral reef, where the depth of water rises from hundreds of fathoms up a near vertical cliff, to about 4 feet.

Lieutenant Walsh, our observer, was winched down on board for a preliminary look before the *Wessex* returned to report the wreck. He landed on the harpoon deck, amid slabs of rotting whale meat, and proceeded aft and below for a tour of inspection. This revealed the chaos of a ship looted, both boats gone, but apparently no structural damage or leak, due to stranding and every evidence of sound mechanical condition. Thoughts of a plunge over the side were quickly dispersed by the lazy swirl of a shark in the deep water astern of the vessel. Recovering the observer, the helicopter returned to *London*.

After a conference at which the exciting word 'salvage' was bandied about, the Commander and the Shipwright Officer were borne aloft in the helicopter for a further inspection of the *Konan Maru*. This confirmed the observer's impressions, and produced enough information on the material condition of the stranded vessel to warrant a third sortie, with electricians, engineers and a diving team. By now the day was wearing on. Efforts to start the generators (there was still H.P. air available) all but succeeded, and it seemed that, if the *Konan Maru* could have been pulled off the coral pedestal, our technical talents could have got her under way under her own power. Certainly her big diesel engine appeared to be ready to go. But it was a big 'if'. Lines led from the bow to a bight over the stern, and both anchors were laid out over the edge of the reef astern of the vessel, bearing witness to the fact that someone had tried pretty hard already. How much pull would it take? The divers (protected against sharks by their suits, shark repellent and a rifle) established that *Konan Maru* was lying on her keel and port bilge keel, and in fact rocking ever so gently in the swell. But-600 tons.

Reluctantly, balancing the risk of damage to a very valuable G.M.D. against the possibility of success, and the likely value of a whale catcher when salvaged, even intact, the conclusion was reached that the attempt

was not justified. *London* therefore contented herself with reporting the details of her find to the Commander Far East Fleet and, with regrets among the more romantic adventurers aboard sailed about her business, leaving *Konan Maru* to her fate.

It was estimated that she had been stranded up to a month before we saw her. Quaintly, emergency lights, powered by an auxiliary battery, were still burning, albeit dimly, but a calendar found on board had the dates carefully crossed off day by day up to 17th April. Clearly the crew had had time to remove everything of value—even the gyro compass repeaters and the radar and radio transmitters were gone.

A month later we heard that *Konan Maru* had vanished from Royal Captain's Shoal—leaving yet another mystery—where and how? Anyway, nothing remains to the *London* of her find of this desolate little ship, except the memory for those who took part of a fascinating day spent investigating her, and a couple of cactus plants in the Commander's cabin which he considerately rescued from the *Konan Maru's* bridge.



Requiem

There will be some,
When all is said and done,
Who will then say,
In a most infuriating way,
Who or what the Hell was Bruin?

He had his hours,
When choirs
Of pussers sang his praises
Unaware that fortune's wheel
Had damned his stainless steel
To pushing daisies
In the dockyard dump.

It might be said
That Bruin's now dead.
But how can we,
While drinking cups of pusser's tea,
Be sure he's gone?

The Sailor's Bible

by PETTY OFFICER LARDER

A sailor was taken before a Portsmouth magistrate for playing cards in church during Divine Service. His defence was as follows—

'I have been about six weeks in Pompey. I have neither Bible nor Common Prayer Book. I have nothing but a pack of cards, and hope to satisfy your Honour of the purity of my intentions.'

Then spreading the cards before the magistrate, he continued: 'When I see the Ace it reminds me that there is but one God; the deuce reminds me of the Father and Son; the three reminds me of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The four reminds me of the Four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. When I see the five it reminds me of the wise virgins that trimmed the lamps. There were ten—five were wise, five were foolish and were shut out. When I see the six, it reminds me that in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth. The seven reminds me that on the seventh day God rested from the great work he had made and hallowed it. The eight reminds me of the eight righteous people who were saved when God destroyed the world, viz. Noah and his wife,

his sons and their wives. When I see the nine it reminds me of the nine lepers who were cleansed by our Saviour. The ten reminds me of the Ten Commandments which God handed down to Moses on the tablet of stone. When I see the Queen it reminds me of the Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon, for she was a wise woman and he a man. She brought 50 boys and fifty girls, all dressed in boys apparel, for King Solomon to tell which were boys and which were girls. The King sent for water for them to wash. The girls washed to the elbows, the boys to the wrists, so King Solomon judged by that. The King reminds me of the King of Heaven, which is God almighty. When I count the number of spots there are in a pack, I find 365—as many days as there are in a year. When I count the number of cards in a pack I find 52—the number of weeks in a year. I find there are twelve picture cards in a pack, representing the months in a year, and counting the tricks I find 13, the number of weeks in a quarter, so you see, your Honour, a pack of cards serves me for a Bible, Almanack and Common Prayer Book'.

'Well,' said the magistrate, 'you have described every card in the pack but one'.

'What is that?'

'The Knave,' said the magistrate.

'I will give your Honour a description of that too, if you will not be angry. The Greatest Knave I know is the Church Officer who brought me here'.

'I do not know if he is,' said the magistrate, 'but I know he is the greatest fool.'

A Night in Rio

I'd had a few drinks and was beginning to feel a little tired so I decided to take a stroll. Where could one go in Rio? Eventually I found myself wandering aimlessly along the banks of a pleasant stream when suddenly I heard a tiny voice—a strange sound, like someone crying. With difficulty I discovered from where the sound came. A small toad crouched by the path side, and it was crying bitterly. I at once felt sorry for the poor creature and picked it up, placed it in my cap and walked across to a nearby log to sit and think awhile.

Soon it began to get dark. I couldn't leave the little toad so I took it back on board the ship with me. Then the most amazing thing happened. As I watched the toad on my bunk it spoke to me and told me its sad story. Many months before, the toad had been a beautiful princess in love with a handsome sailor. Alas a wicked witch had found her and

turned her into an ugly toad. Before she could ever be herself again it was necessary to stay at least a night at sea. I decided to help.

Before going to sleep, I placed the little creature in my pillow beside me. Later that night I awoke suddenly and was startled by someone banging on the door. I opened the door and a stern voice demanded 'What's that woman doing in your bed'.

I turned and saw the dusky maiden and realised. . . .

'Well, that all seems very reasonable, Master-at-Arms. Case dismissed !'

A Pair of Eyes from an Empty Bottle. . .

by LEADING SEAMAN WILSON

An empty bottle had been placed in a mess in the hope that it would attract a few odd coins but as yet a use for the coins had not been decided on. It was then that I had the idea of starting a collection for the Blind. That was the birth of London's Guide Dog. The sum of £250 was needed in order to train a dog into the eyes of those less fortunate than you or I.

I gave myself the task of raising this princely sum from *London's* Ship's Company. Each pay day I ventured forth around the ship. The response was overwhelming and the small coinage appeared from some of the most inconceivable places.

The fund mounted steadily and surely. Various methods of collection were used. Perhaps the best success came from the ship's dances where raffles were held with appealing prizes. Another profitable enterprise was a stall, set up on the Flight Deck at various ports of call on our South American cruise, when visitors to the ship donated splendidly in their own currency. This proved to be quite a problem in itself—counting and checking cents, pesos, cruzeros, escudos and centavos; still the fund grew.

The target seemed a long way off. The campaign was renewed with relish with the aid of *London's* television, and small raffles held on board helped to increase the fund until finally the goal was nigh. The Welfare Fund and Wardroom kindly agreed to ring the bell by donating the last few pounds and my mission had been accomplished.

All that now remained on return to U.K. is to present the 250 to the Guide Dog Association, for which the ship will receive a trophy.

On behalf of the G.D.A. I would like to thank the Ship's Company in their response to such a worth while cause.

U S

Sure a little bit of heaven fell from out the sky one day,
And it landed up at Wallsend, now so many miles away,
The Admiralty looked at it and shouted out with glee,
We'll turn it into *London*; what a lovely ship she'll be.

So they drew her out on paper 'til it really looked quite grand, And
sent it to Swan Hunter's where they waved their magic wand,
After lots of sweat and toil that took them many a year, They *sent*
her down the slipway and commissioned her with beer.

They fitted her with turbines just to make the beauty go,
And not, as many of you think, to fill the space below,
A great big shining galley, all sparkling and all bright,
And great big headlights by the bridge to show the way at night.

Then all at last they thought, alas, that we might have to fight,
So they dreamed of something simple that would do the job alright,
A pair of turrets at the front, some Seacats in a rack,
And a dirty great big Seaslug that just fitted at the back.

Before the ship could go to sea, a crew had to be found,
So they handpicked us from near and far and gathered us around,
And just to prove to everyone their new ship wasn't junk,
They issued each a locker and a nice big comfy bunk.

Then to their horror and dismay a big green patch was found
Where, with the ship in warmer climes, the camp beds would abound,
A phone call to the Fleeties sent a chopper out to sea
And reminded one or two of them they're still in the Navy.

At last the big ship went to sea all happy and serene, And all
at once the faces changed from red or white to green, A
massive plea arose from the men, yes from the hearts of all, '
Please send us back to Pompey and tie up against the wall!'

The Stag's Head

The name of our bar was decided after the arrival on board of one stag's head from an unnamed air station in Scotland, presented to the Mess by the present president, A.A.i. Lipscombe of the ship's flight. The official opening of the bar was carried out by the Captain, shortly after leaving Houston, Texas. The Captain presented us with a photograph of the Port of Houston which was to become one of the many souvenirs given to the Mess during our cruise around South America and South Africa.

We have been honoured to entertain in the bar many distinguished guests, especially H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh (this made the national dailies), the President of the Republic of Peru, their Majesties the King and Queen of Thailand, and numerous Ambassadors, Consuls, and high ranking service officers. Although we were extremely honoured to have visits from so many V.I.P.s, the best social occasions in the Stag's Head have been when we have entertained other servicemen from other Navies and Army Units. One such occasion was back in October 1964, when we took to sea some personnel from the Peruvian Navy for various demonstrations of our weapons and systems. After the show we gave them a very warm welcome in the Stag's Head. We again extended our hospitality to the Brazilian Navy when they came to sea with us for a similar day of demonstrations off Rio de Janeiro. Christmas 1964 was spent in Simonstown, South Africa, so here we were able to use our 'show piece' to its best advantage. Many friends, both civilian and Naval were made during our three and a half week stay. We were sure that the number in the Mess would increase quite considerably because of the popularity of the bar with the C.P.O.s and W.O.s from the South African Navy.

After South Africa, the 'jolly' was over and we joined the Far East Fleet, but even so it was almost impossible not to meet some old ship on the station and to ask friends across and show off our improved surroundings.

When Mr. Mayhew, the Minister of Defence (Navy) toured H.M.S. *London* and visited our Mess, he asked C.P.O. Richmond how the Stag's Head was acquired. The unwitting reply was, 'By private enterprise, sir.'

The first commission members of 2 Mess hope that the next commission members will have a 'Good Commission', and many happy pints in the 'Stag's Head'.

'The Ambassadors'

or

'How not to Succeed in Show Business'

by R.O. HIRST

Once upon a time, not long ago, H.M.S. *London* held a Dance at Kimbells Ballroom, in Portsmouth. During the interval a cacophony of sound smote the ears of all unfortunate enough to be within earshot. Even before the first two bars had been played, the shouts, screams and yells of the guests could be heard as they stampeded into the night—and they have not been heard of since. This, believe it or not, was the Birth of the ship's group.

The rave notices and accolades, however, were so great that Their Lordships in Whitehall booked them for a three and a half month tour of South America, on that famous ship of the grey-funnel line—H.M.S. *London*.

During the passage from the United Kingdom to Bermuda, after much thought and deliberation, 'The Noise' was given a name, as a matter of fact, it was given many names, but in spite of this the group took the name by which it is now known—'The Ambassadors'.

The first victim to experience the sound of 'The Ambassadors' was the Seamen's Mission in Bermuda; however, they seemed to enjoy it, so the lads kept playing until almost midnight. On completion of the dance the group was asked to play at The Musicians Union Club, so armed with their weapons they turned up at the club. When told that music there finished at sunrise, and assured of vital lubrication, they settled down to a four hour session. After hearing the sound, the locals were heard to say, 'What with the Seaslug, the Seacat and the Ambassadors, why should England tremble!' Between Bermuda and Houston, Texas, many hours were spent down in the Cage practising. Many strings were broken, and many arguments were fought out, but the group, undaunted, practised away until they had built up a reasonable repertoire. On arriving in Houston, they were invited to do a Television Show, but unfortunately—or was it fortunately?—they had to leave in a hurry, not just the group but the whole ship. This was due to inclement weather; this fact is mentioned to dispel any rumours that the City of Houston had been warned about the group.

Their fame having spread before them, they were in great demand when they started their South American Tour in Callao. Here they appeared at a dance at the Lima Cricket Club, and were ably supported by the Ship's Companies of four ships.

From Lima they appeared next in Valparaiso, and proceeded to initiate the locals into the appreciation of beat music at the Flying Angel Mission.

Punta Arenas, Chile, was where they achieved their greatest success. Starting with a dance at the British Embassy club, the group played as they had never played before—in tune. That evening 'The Ambassadors' were sharing the stage with a rival group from H.M.S. *Penelope*, unfortunately *Penelope's* group were reported to have disbanded the day after, proof of this is the fact that the bass guitarist of the *Penelope* sold his Bass guitar to 'The Ambassadors', so the rest lost heart. Three nights in a row, after the Embassy Dance, the Ambassadors appeared on the local radio playing to live audiences of local teenagers. The last day of the visit started for the Ambassadors with an open-air performance on radio, in the main square. With a crowd of about two thousand gathered in the square, the group was, to say the least, a little apprehensive about playing, but all fears were quashed when after the first few numbers they had the crowd yelling for more. Unfortunately, they had to stop, because they had another date to play for the Governor, Mayor, Chief of Police and other local dignitaries in the Governor's Mansion. Not knowing the tastes of the guests, the group started their programme very quietly, but seeing that all was not well they soon hotted it up and had everyone including the Governor tapping their feet and clapping their hands, so they continued with 'Beat Music'. To round off a very tiring day the Ambassadors went to the biggest Hotel in Town, where they had been requested to play at a Charity Dinner given by the 'Lions Club of Punta Arenas' in order to raise money to buy an incubator for the local Children's Hospital. Here they were wine and dined, and played until the early hours of the morning. After this mammoth performance in Punta Arenas, the group were extremely tired and for the next eleven days until their arrival in Rio, they enjoyed a well-earned rest, trying to catch up on some lost sleep.

At this point, I would like to say that during their stay in Punta Arenas, an offer was made to the group by a very wealthy businessman to stay in Punta Arenas, but . . . !

Rio de Janeiro was the highlight of the tour. The first day in they were invited to play at the Rio Cricket and Football Club; this they did and gave such a good account of themselves that they were invited to play again next evening, so they did just that. A couple of days later they appeared on Rio T.V. as guest artists (the word being used in its

loosest form) of a Teenage Beat Show. Suffering the setback of their drummer putting his sticks through the skin of his snare drum during rehearsal, and the last minute panic of getting him a new drum, they then played live on the air giving a performance to warrant a crowd of fans waiting for them outside the studio to mob them afterwards.

A great loss to the group occurred when the Lead guitarist went back to England, but only after the group moved Heaven and Earth to try and keep him, but to no avail. A Bass guitarist was acquired and a reshuffling of the group took place; however when the ship arrived in Capetown the Bass guitarist decided that Capetown had much more to offer than U.K.—so then there were three again. From Capetown to Mauritius the three remaining members had to work the best they could, and, as a tryout, they played at a dance at H.M.S. *Mauritius*; this seemed to go fairly well, so once again 'The Ambassadors' are back in business.

The members of the original group were:

L.R.O. WATT	Lead guitarist—now back in U.K.
L.E.M. PRIESTNALL	Bass guitarist
A.B. HEMMING	Rhythm guitarist
L.R.O. HIRST	Drums
A.B. HEAD	Vocalist

The reshuffling of the group put John Priestnall as Lead guitarist and we acquired E.M. Alan Salter as the new Bass guitarist. All came under the General Managership of A.B. Barney Smith.



Ambassadors All

by CHIEF WRITER BOARD

One facet of the sailor's make-up which has never failed to amaze me is his facility for making himself understood in any language anywhere in the world, and his adaptability to any local customs, especially if they include drinking a quart of wine at one draught, dancing all night in the streets or doing a ritual fire dance with a pretty maiden. Never was this attribute more highly displayed to me than during my time in H.M.S. *London*. In South America the main language is Spanish and the fact that hardly one member of the ship's company speaks this language did not daunt the stout hearts of the *Londoners*. The sailor's idea of any language is normally based on what he has seen in films or read in the 'Eagle' or 'Beano', and it seems that the local natives must also have seen the same films or read the same comics because Jack is almost universally understood. To illustrate this, I was in a restaurant one night in Chile, thumbing through my Spanish/English book and desperately trying to make the waiter understand what I wanted when I walked two of our well-wined sailors. They called the waiter over, raised two fingers in the V for Victory sign and yelled 'El dos Eggo Sanis Senor' and in two minutes they were munching on two freshly made egg sandwiches. Enthralled I went into a huddle with the sailors and their sanis and I discovered that the secret was to put 'El' in front of everything and add 'o' at the end, gesticulating wildly meanwhile. I decided to try this and I called the waiter over. 'El una Coldo beero' I bellowed at him, waving my arms frantically and lo, an iced beer arrived. I threw my Spanish/English book away and spoke like a native for the rest of the cruise.

I went one night to a Chilean C.P.O.'s reception where I met a chap who did not speak a word of English and, as my Spanish was limited to 'Beunas Noches Senorita' I did not envisage a non-stop chat with him. However, two hours and four bottles of wine later I knew that he was married, had three children including a twin, that they lived in a flat in Valparaiso and that his favourite drink was peach wine. I also gathered that Britain was the father of the Chilean Navy and that we were all grand fellows. Agreeing with him madly I shared another bottle of wine with him whereupon we were both sick which sounds pretty much the same in either Spanish or English!

In South Africa the entire ship's company became experts in Afrikaans. Ratings talked of the Braai Flesch's (barbecues) they had attended, and went around the ship muttering 'Guten Morgen' and 'Danke Tu' at every opportunity. Simonstown became 'Snooky' and if any colour

problem existed Jack was blissfully unaware of it. He stoutly stepped into railway coaches marked 'Niet Blankes' and, from long habit, automatically turned into the first bar outside the dockyard gates, regardless of any signs or notices hung outside. We left South Africa with everyone a confirmed 'Yarpy' at heart and with an additional language learned.

The Far East, with its many different dialects of Chinese, Malay, Tamil, Indian, etc. would deter a normally sane person, but not so Britain's little ambassadors. They recklessly leap into taxis and rickshaws bellowing 'You takee me Chinee Fleet Club damn fast' and are borne thence immediately. They haggle fiercely over the price of 'rabbits' in a mixture of Beano-type Chinese, lower-deck cursing and downright threatened violence. One chap who felt he had been seen off told the Chinese proprietor pleasantly that 'If I don't get my clevi's back, I'll stick one on your hooter and mix your molars with the rice you've just yomped'. His money was promptly returned although the offending Oriental gentleman spoke not a word of English.

Decades of mixing with Jack has produced a peculiar strain of bar girl in the East who has come half way to meet Jack with his language problem. These girls have a patois of pidgin lower-deck English and the following is a typical conversation when Jack enters a bar (which he is frequently wont to do):

GIRL: 'Hey there Jack, you buy me one nice dlink'.

JACK: 'Get knotted'.

GIRL: 'Why for you tell me get knotted—you no lovee me anymore?'

JACK: 'Get me a beer'.

Girl produces beer plus a thimble full of coca-cola for herself.

GIRL: 'Eight dollar please'.

JACK: 'You're b. . .y well joking!'

GIRL: 'Two dollar for beer, six dollar my dlink'.

JACK: 'Who the hell said I was buying you a drink?'

GIRL: 'Whatsa matter you? I have nice flat, you my boy fiend and I finish here in one hour'.

JACK: 'Here's ten dollars—and bring back two dollars change you slant-eyed, rice yaffling daughter of delight'.

GIRL: 'Hokay honey, I keep change for taxi. Now you my boyflend while ship here'.

JACK: 'I love you—what's your name?'