

# H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

## A MAGAZINE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

SEPTEMBER, 2017

Nº 10



OUR SWORDS WE BARE  
OUR SPIRITS DARE

CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION IS ROBIN SMITH

[www.hmssuperb.co.uk](http://www.hmssuperb.co.uk) and on Facebook

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**Superb - Defending Britain Since 1710**

# ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

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Hello Shipmates,

S.M. Jim Copus came by to see us a couple of weeks ago. We spoke of where our mates ended up on leaving the 'Andrew'. It threw up some really successful careers of a most unlikely nature. Late shipmate Len Sturdy set out as a London Transport bus driver, graduated to a large articulated lorry-mounted exhibition for the Hoover Company.

Part of his itinerary was the Kent County Show, about 4 miles up the road from my home. When packing up to move to his next venue all surplus items in the truck would come to my place. To have enough Persil to last the next twelve months dumped on the door step could be an embarrassment in my small cul-de-sac.

Jo loved the displays of potted silk flowers and shrubs. Later Len moved from Dagenham to Mark, in Somerset. He moved his meagre home furnishings and Joan from one place to the other, by several round trips, in his Reliant Robin (yes, Del-boy's van). Prior to the motorway being built that must have been a gruelling round trip - he was no quitter!

By happenstance he did a service for a friend by drawing a simple kitchen extension, then presented it to the 'planning office' in person. To shorten this tale I can tell you that from that he became the local architect of choice. As buildings got larger and more sophisticated he was the man to guide your project through the planning 'minefield'. His stature became such that at his funeral it really was standing room only in the church at Mark.

His friendly, easy-going manner must have been the major tool in his box, his ingredient for success.

Shipmate Copus started in the London Docks (Port of London authority). He said entry did follow the traditional pattern, eased because several family members work there. To get on the tugs he says one had to be ex. R.N. or M.N. Seamen. He got that dream job on the London river, and did not look back, to become Master of his own boat. I suspect everyone knows T.I.D. Tugs - Ministry of War transport built 182- small, dumpy and coal fired. I told him a couple had come to a breakers' yard of my acquaintance when time expired. One still had a bell hung on the

bridge front, cast into it the name *Dollar Bay*.

As I stood, looking down with feelings of felonious intent, a colleague crept up behind and said, 'I know what you are thinking Andy; which of us is first going to make that disappear!'. Alas, neither of us got it.

Jim Copus then said he had crewed that tug many times before



its disposal for scrap. He told of a time easing a vessel out of dock, looking up he saw on board another ex. Super Bee, Tom Clayton. I also met Tom, years later, when working for B.P.. Tom was a contract rigger. We were also in the same Chatham field gun crew, in days of yore. Some things just go round and round.

To the picture of S.M. Copus and Jo, hard to believe he is that much taller than she. I think he is standing on her purse. I tried to paint a T.I.D. and offered it to Jim, who graciously did accept it, complaining the chimney was too short - he said it would suffice to block a spy hole in his lavatory door at the top of the garden.

To our proper painters, hand on heart, I claim no artistic merit, can only say your arty eye will discern, at once, it to be in the style of Mike Angelo, well known dhiso driver of Malta.

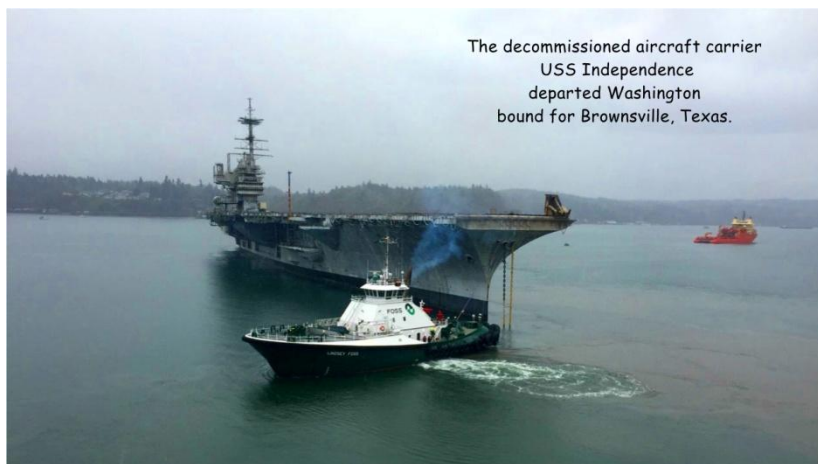
Local boys, like our esteemed chairman, was a technical worker for B.A.E. at Rochester avionics site. Prior to retirement he became a schoolmaster at their apprentice block. How satisfying to encourage the young, open mind.

Have met Ray Lambert only on one occasion, a couple of years ago at the King Charles.

We know him as the author of a couple of books that give an insight into Ganges during his tenure. Robin once mentioned Ray had been a journalist. I cannot say for whom, or what his subjects were, sounds interesting. Should he join us this year I hope to ask.

I am not, really, a Nosey Parker, more curious to know none of us fell by the wayside, proud of the get up and go demonstrated by the lower deckers.

Initially I set off to mention a tug story. A small picture sparked the interest; a solitary large tug with an aircraft carrier in tow, it had set off from Bremerton U.S. naval base in the Seattle



The decommissioned aircraft carrier  
USS Independence  
departed Washington  
bound for Brownsville, Texas.

areas of the Pacific north. The carrier was one of the conventional powered named *Independence*, of the Midway class, I think. Tow was 16,000 miles, down the entire Americas, through the Magellan Straits - a confident tug master must be needed for that! Then due north up the Atlantic to breakers' yard in Brownsville, Texas. I feel anyone who did that tow has earned the right for some vigorous lamp

swinging.

This could be a record, I drank only tea during the writing of this missive, it could well therefore, be illegible.

# The government proclaims this year 2017 is 'THE YEAR OF THE NAVY'.

---

The First Sea Lord, Sir Philip Jones had the 'maritime conference' cancelled at the navy's request! Suggested reason was 'cold feet', the system does not want the press asking/publishing awkward questions about its procurement and budget in a 'negative' manner.

I read another report stating reporters could only attend an R.A.F. conference if they bought a ticket costing £850.00. I thought, as tax payers, they already had a ticket. Where, you may ask, is all this 'transparency' ministers ever boast about. The M.O.D. are quite oblivious to the fact they are a 'Department of State', every farthing it handles/spends 'comes out of your pocket'. I can only conclude Michael Fallon, Knight of the Realm, and Defence Secretary is a devious disseminator of monstrous porkies.

His doings opaque. We are, obviously, no longer an 'industrial nation'. Agriculture seems to thrive, (though on reduced basic wage labour from East Europe). Is this, I wonder, a result of all the bull shit spread liberally by the Ministry of Defence? Am still amazed at their expenses. Each M.O.D. Civil Servant has a plastic card, which goes mostly unchecked, purchases unauthenticated. Recall we once spoke of the Civil Servant who had purchased Stylish Silk Knickers for his 'secretary'.

I am aware my fellow associate members all have an interest in basic science = Actions that precipitate reaction. What reaction was expected from that action?, the gross misuse of our meagre funds. It will not be apparent on the Web, but I cut the original last page of this letter; no desire to make our sub-editor, Mz Libby, blush (*Mz. L that'll take some doing!! I used to be a hairdresser*).

Now, I think it would be fun to have a wee competition: All members submit a version of 'what happened next ..?'.  
..?

You never can tell what happens in the literary world, we could spawn a 'Whitehall best seller' and all migrate to Utopia on the proceeds....

Ah!! in our day dreams, life was ever thus.

I send you all a fond - but manly - hug.



Apologies for 2 mistakes in copywriting Andy's Musings for last month.

1. In the paragraph discussing Russian Intelligence the word Tankers was mistakenly inserted & should be replaced by Carriers.
2. A short sentence was omitted concerning the Singapore Navy.

## WHAT SILLY NONSENSE

Nelson's towering virtues dwarf his vices: As a campaign is launched to pull down the hero's statue because he was a 'white supremacist', MAX HASTINGS is exasperated

By [MAX HASTINGS FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

PUBLISHED: 24 August 2017



Journalist Afua Hirsch has started a campaign to pull down the statue of Lord Nelson, arguing that he was a 'white supremacist'

Afua Hirsch is a 36-year-old half-British, half-Ghanaian journalist brought up in London who, until this week, scarcely anybody had heard of.

She has now, however, achieved her five minutes of notoriety, space in the *Guardian* and a television debate, by proposing that Nelson's statue in Trafalgar Square should be torn from its plinth among the pigeons because he was a 'white supremacist'.

She is pursuing the trail blazed by the Oxford protesters who seek to depose Cecil Rhodes, the Bristol campaigners who have secured the rebranding of the Colston Hall concert venue, and the Americans who are everywhere overthrowing images of Confederate Civil War heroes.

All those whose monuments are being challenged face similar charges — exploitation of black people, engagement in slavery. Some modern black or mixed-

race British and American people find it offensive that representations of historic figures who cruelly mistreated their forefathers should continue to occupy places of honour in our communities.

Because summer is not yet over and most of us have many reasons for happiness, I refuse to froth and foam about Afua Hirsch's outburst: she is entitled to further her career as best as she can.

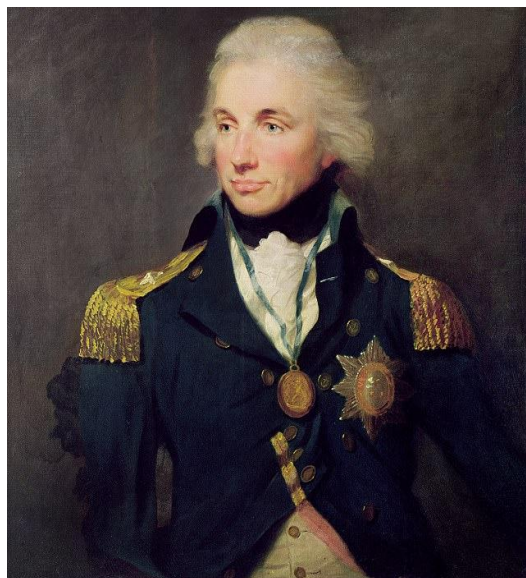
Instead, we may briefly review the record of Vice-Admiral Viscount Nelson, whose presence in Trafalgar Square she finds offensive, for different causes from those that once irked the old French President Charles de Gaulle.



Horatio Nelson was born in a Norfolk rectory in 1758, and secured his first command 20 years later through the influence of his uncle, who was a senior naval officer.

In his youth, beyond a brush with a polar bear while a midshipman on an expedition to find a north-east passage to the Pacific in 1773, he experienced his share of disappointments and indeed unemployment.

Then the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars opened the way for a long succession of triumphs, the earliest taking place in the Mediterranean, where he was blinded in his right eye.



**Nelson had his faults - his behaviour towards his wife being one of them - but his attributes of courage, bravery and tactical brilliance put these well and truly in the shade**

He distinguished himself commanding HMS Captain at the 1797 Battle of Cape St Vincent against a larger Spanish force off the coast of Portugal, and mislaid his right arm in the unsuccessful action at Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

In the following year, he commanded a British fleet in the first of his historic victories at the Battle of the Nile.

Nelson's reputation — for personal courage, aggression and tactical brilliance — won him the adoration of his captains

and indeed crews. To this was soon added the love of Sir William Hamilton's wife Emma, whom he met at Naples.

In 1801, he secured another victory, this time over the Danes, at Copenhagen, bequeathing to folklore the story that he ignored an order to withdraw by putting a telescope to his blind eye to read the flag signal.

He subsequently commanded fleets involved in a blockade of French ships in Toulon harbour, and in unsuccessful pursuit of the French and Spanish fleets to the West Indies.

Only on October 21, 1805, did he finally bring the enemy to battle off Spain's Cape Trafalgar, which became his greatest victory and secured Britain against invasion by the vast army Napoleon had assembled on the Channel coast.

At Trafalgar and in the actions that immediately followed, the French and Spanish lost 24 ships of the line, more than Nelson commanded when he engaged. He was shot down by a sharpshooter in the tops of the French Redoubtable, and died three hours later.

Nelson's signal before the battle 'England confides that every man will do his duty'; his words as he lay dying: 'Kiss me Hardy. Take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Thank God I have done my duty', have ever since been part of every British schoolchild's education.

*Nit-picking about these things is ridiculous. Nelson was a man of his time*

Afua Hirsch remains unmoved. Her attention focuses on Nelson's friendships with West Indian slave traders, and his description of the ideals of abolitionist William Wilberforce as 'a damnable and cruel doctrine'.



Putting about such ideas, Nelson wrote to a friend in June 1805, encouraged rebellion in Britain's West Indian islands.

Nelson's finest biographer, John Sugden, observes that it is uncertain how far this remark reflected the Admiral's considered view.

He was exemplarily kind to black sailors who did good service on his ships, and in 1802 wrote another letter in support of a proposal by one of his own officers to employ free Chinese labour in the West Indies instead of slaves.

To most of us, all nit-picking about these things is ridiculous. Nelson was a man of his time. He would have mocked the notion of women being granted the vote; though he disliked the 'cat', offenders were cruelly flogged on his ships.

There is no record that he was much troubled by the hanging of sheep-stealers or the impressment of poachers into ships' crews, any more than were the ruling classes of the civilised world.

**These facts matter little to Hirsch, because Nelson denounced Wilberforce's campaign to abolish slavery - though his biographers dispute how true this was of his general opinion**

All that matters, in the eyes of sensible British people, is that Nelson wrought wonderful service against his country's foes. Without his genius at sea, it is conceivable that the tyrant Bonaparte could have prevailed over our ancestors.

His towering virtues make his vices, among which conceit and nastiness to his wife were conspicuous, visible only through a microscope — one which is now in the hands of Afua Hirsch and her friends, whom I venture to guess know little and care less about the Napoleonic Wars.

I will offer them comfort, however, on another such case: that against America's statues of Confederate Civil War heroes. Most were erected in the early 20th century by Southern segregationist politicians, for the explicit purpose of glorifying the cause of white supremacy in their lifetimes.

In other words, they were created not as authentic acts of commemoration, as was Nelson's Column in the 1840s, but instead to support an ugly and indeed indefensible racist case, and in pursuit of Southern hopes of reversing the consequences of the U.S. Civil War, their own fathers' defeat.

It is thus understandable why black Americans, and many white ones, too, want them removed.

Contrarily, while the mining tycoon and nation-builder Cecil Rhodes was an unpleasant human being, he made a notable contribution to the British Empire of his day — when even the best people were imperialists — and to philanthropy after his death.

*The past is another country in which matters were done differently*

Edward Colston is commemorated not because he was a successful 17th and 18th-century slave trader, but because he was a prominent citizen of Bristol, who did many good things for that city.

History is shot through with bad behaviour. In the heyday of empire, West Indian sugar processed by slaves was a cornerstone of Britain's prosperity.

Likewise many imperial generals, up to and including Kitchener, were at best cavalier, at worst brutal, in their treatment of native races, including prisoners. We no longer treat people so





cruelly, any more than we hang convicted homosexuals as did the courts-martial of Nelson's Royal Navy, but it is childish to pretend that we can undo their customs and reverse their verdicts, hundreds of years later.

The Welsh might as well demand the right to tear down the ruins of Edward I's magnificent castles in their country, because they were built to hold Wales under English subjection.

In this silly season, we should laugh off Afua Hirsch's spasm of silliness about Nelson. But if a day comes when our rulers take seriously such demands, agree to erase portions of our heritage as Stalin erased Trotsky from every photograph of the Russian Revolutionaries, then we shall relinquish essential cultural values, rooted in a proper understanding of history.

The past is another country in which matters were done differently, but we must continue to revere our great men and women, heedless of the odd blot on their escutcheons.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Good Morning Brian from a very cold Canberra Australia,

I have just received from HM medals division a knock back for Dave's Suez campaign medal, I am coming over to the UK at the end of August to scatter Dave's ashes in the Solent hope the weather will be fine. This was his wish as he had been out very many times to scatter ashes for other ship mates who had crossed the bar.

Regards from Wendy Norman



# SCRAN BAG (FREE ADVERTISING)

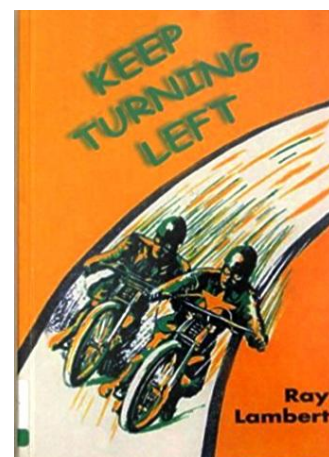
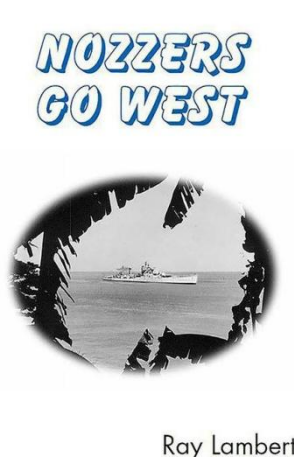
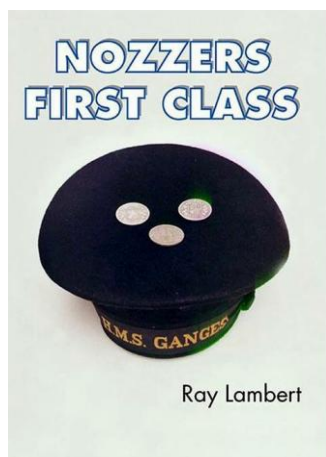
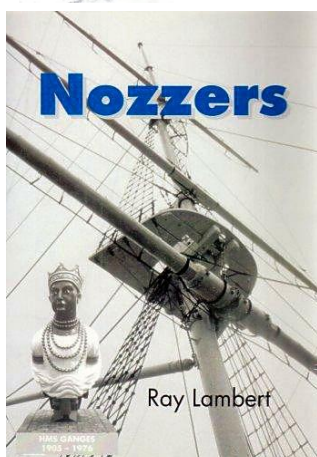
This section contains adverts from members. If you decide to purchase an item from them please note you deal directly with the member selling.

If you have something to say about this section or advertise an article please email Brian at [hmssuperb2u@sfr.fr](mailto:hmssuperb2u@sfr.fr)

## Ray Lambert



Has some of his books for sale which may remind you of how it was when we had wooden ships and iron men (well almost!)



Follow the author when he was a handsome young man in Ganges and as he joins HMS Superb at Chatham. Go with him as he begins the "Luxury Cruise" of 1954-55. Join him from Punta Arenas to Vancouver and much in between. Learn of Guantanamo Bay and the Falklands before they became headline news.

Ray also knows his speedway onions - having reported on Canterbury and Crayford speedway clubs in the 1970s - and isn't afraid to ride his hobbyhorses in some style.

Each book costs £7.95 including UK postage. For more information contact Ray by email

Click [here to contact Ray](#) by email



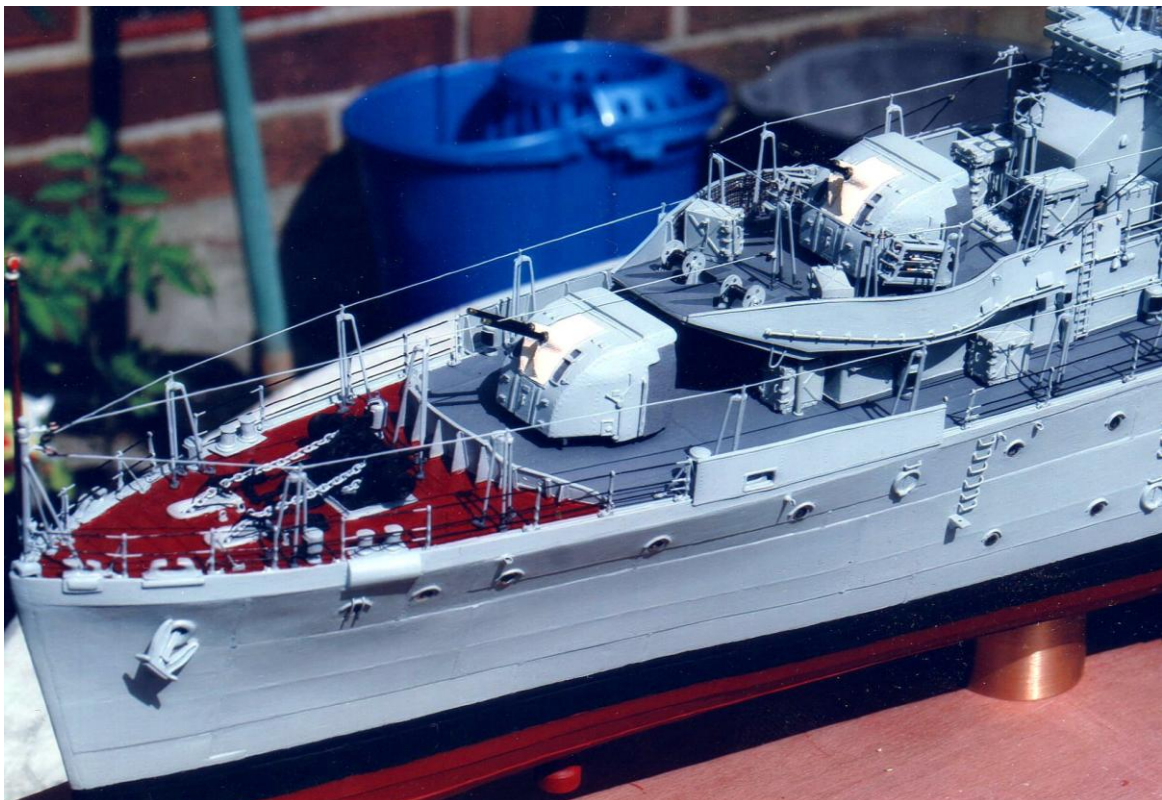
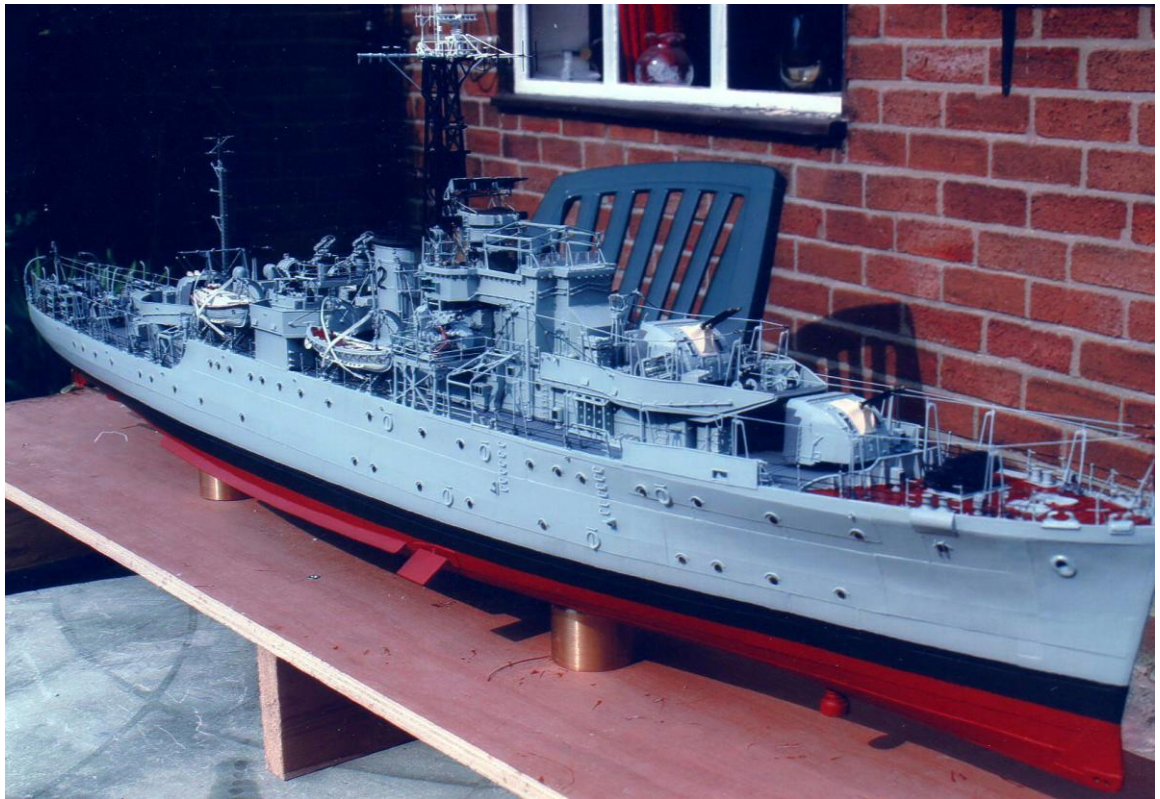
# SHIP FOR SALE !

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Shipmate Brian Turner has spent 3½ years carefully constructing a model of HMS Cygnet (U38).

The quality of his work is evident from the photos. On 8th April, 1944 in the north Atlantic just north-west of Cape Finisterre the *Cygnet*, together with *HMS Crane*, depth charged and sank the German U-Boat *U-962*.

*HMS Cygnet* was a Black Swan Class sloop and the model together with its glass show case is now up for sale



You can view more photos of the model by clicking on this [LINK](#) and examine the detail more minutely.

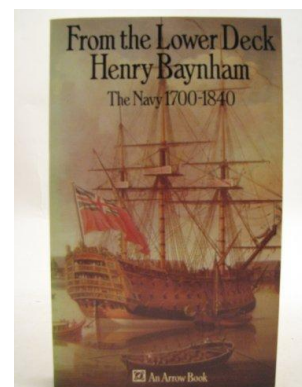
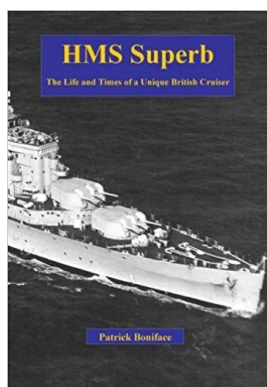
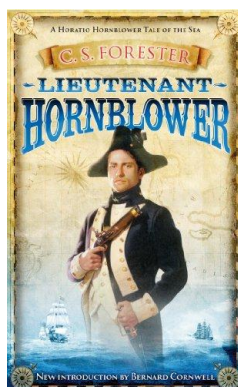
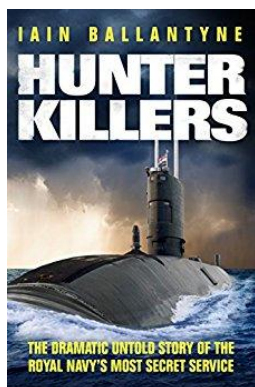
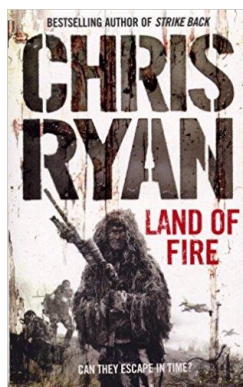
Length of model is 36 inches

PRICE: £2,000

For more details please contact Brian Turner Click [HERE](#) to send email

**YOU TOO CAN ADVERTISE HERE FOR FREE  
- CONTACT BRIAN BY EMAIL**

**YOU WILL FIND MENTION OF HMS SUPERB IN ALL OF THESE BOOKS**



**LAND OF FIRE** - author Chris Ryan - The submarine *HMS Superb* is mentioned from Chapter 12 (page 121 in the paperback version) when it was involved in the fictional landing of an SAS squad on Tierra del Fuego circa 2002. **Fiction.**

**HUNTER KILLERS** - author Iain Ballantyne - follows the careers of four daring British submarine captains who risked their lives to keep the rest of us safe, their exploits consigned to the shadows until now. Their experiences encompass the span of the Cold War, from voyages in WW2-era submarines under Arctic ice to nuclear-powered espionage missions in Soviet-dominated seas.

There are dangerous encounters with Russian spy ships in UK waters and finally, as the communist facade begins to crack, they hold the line against the Kremlin's oceanic might, playing a leading role in bringing down the Berlin Wall. It is the first time they have spoken out about their covert lives in the submarine service.



This is the dramatic untold story of Britain's most-secret service. Chapter 50 *follows HMS Superb*. **Non Fiction**

**LIEUTENANT HORNBLOWER** - author C.S. Forrester - In July of 1796 during the Napoleonic Wars when Hornblower's best friend Bush received his commission as lieutenant while serving on *HMS Superb*, and thus took the first significant step in his career as a naval officer. Bush recalls that he relied more on "seamanship and not navigation" to pass the requisite examination. **Fiction**.

**HMS SUPERB** - author Patrick Boniface - An account of one voyage of the cruiser between 1954 - 55. Presented as a ship's log with historical content. **Non Fiction**.

**FROM THE LOWER DECK** - author Henry Baynham. An Arrow book ISBN 009 9065401. A picture of life in the Royal Navy between 1780 & 1840 as described by common sailors at the time. Mention of *HMS Superb* 74 is on Page 149 of the paperback version by George Watson. **Non Fiction**



# JOTTINGS OF A VERY ORDINARY SEAMAN

(by Ray Lambert)

One day just as we were mustering to begin that day's coursework outside the Gunnery School, an edict came down that in future we had to write QA2 (U) on those interminable bits of paper the navy were keen on having filled in at every conceivable opportunity. No-one appeared to know why but, a few days later ...

'The course is being cut short,' we were told. We had already guessed that anyway; the entire QA branch was being phased out and we were the last class ever. Maybe during the wars QA's were handy but ever since that time we had Ordnance bods in the dockyard and Artificers on board and in most cases QA's didn't even get to carry their tool bags, so, in light of the modern technology (computers etc) it was a sensible move to do away with a redundant dinosaur branch. I wasn't that bothered anyway, I'd had my year safely ashore thank you.

We completed our eight weeks in the workshop and were all graded with a qualifying pass, including me although I let myself down badly with making things and drilling things but that was not the end of the matter because the navy in their wisdom had another little twist for us.....

That was where that almost forgotten (U) reared its head again.

'When you get your drafts, you apply for your rate after six months aboard' we were informed. This was greeted with groans and adverse, mostly rude, comments almost to the point of mutiny. I didn't give a toss, I'd had my shore -time and as far as I was concerned they could have their rate and their badge, I was ready to face the world just like a pig in clover.

From that day on, Believe it or not, I never ever thought of that rate again and no-one ever mentioned it to me - but after I'd finished my time, one day I received a cheque for the exact amount (1/6 a day) for a little over three years back pay. The navy bought me some nice new carpets!



# BADGE DRINKING IN NEW YORK

By Phil Grimson

New York, 1953.

When we arrived in New York and approached the berth allocated to us I saw that we were in the next docking space to the Queen Mary who greeted us with the cheeky signal. "Will hoist you inboard at 13.30" (Which, incidentally she was well capable of doing, towering over us like a skyscraper over a beach hut).

That evening, Leading Writer John Marsden and I decided to take a stroll along Broadway to admire the fantastic display of lights, especially those circulating around the Times Building giving the latest news headlines.



Of course, as two innocents abroad (tongue in cheek) we were also looking for a place of refreshment and found one just off Broadway, a dimly lit bar with colourfully lit windows which invited further inspection. We entered the bar, which, even in the dim light, we could see was packed, but with a low volume of conversation, and approached the bar.

The bartender, a tall heavily made up blonde washing glasses, half turned, and in the usual New Yorker bartender fashion, asked, "What can I get youse guys?" John piped up "A couple of Buds please" A couple of bottles of Budweiser were plonked on the bar. "That'll be X dollars fellas." We paid up and leaning over the bar to take the money, it became obvious that this was no lady, confirmed by the five o'clock shadow beginning to make itself apparent.

As he turned away John asked, "How about some glasses, please?" To which came back the reply, "Don't be silly, only cissies drink out of glasses!"

The bar erupted with laughter and on turning round we saw that the entire clientele were males.

We later learned that the bar, which was called 'The Blue Parrot', was just one of a nationwide chain of 'gay' bars, a word which, in those days, was foreign to us.



**Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, 1955**

The facilities at GITMO were superb. The mess hall was gigantic and we were all royally entertained by the US Navy and US marines stationed there. After a session of seeing



just how much beer we could consume we were given a guided tour round the base and down to the sea.

Walking along a pier we came across a sign which had most of us Brits in fits of laughter but left our American hosts looking puzzled.

The sign read 'NO BATHING - BEWARE OF MARINE LIFE'.

LONG BEACH INDEPENDENT

30 AUGUST 1955.

Beach Cleaning House Association and a member of the board of directors of the Miss Universe Pageant, Inc., and of the Long Beach Convention Bureau.

## Jolly Pleased, HMS Superb Leaves L.B.

Jolly well pleased with their six-day stay here, the crew of the British cruiser HMS Superb steamed out of Long Beach harbor Monday for Acapulco.

"We express great pleasure at the facilities so generously provided in Long Beach. We very much enjoyed the hospitality and kindness of the local residents," said Vice Adm. Sir John F. Stevens in a message to Consul-General M. C. Gillett, Los Angeles.

But one aspect of the cruiser's visit remains unfinished, perhaps forever.

A cricket game with the Griffith Park Cricket Association and the ship's team had to be called Sunday for lack of time to finish. A spokesman for the British consul explained that an average cricket game takes up to four days to play out.

In other activities here, the ship's company played the UCLA soccer team, tying at 3-3, and men of the ship visited movie studios and points of interest in Long Beach.

## City Committee on Tidelands

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# DIPPERS & SIPPERS

As dictated by Denis Vichion

Denis served as an Ordinary Torpedoman aboard *HMS Superb* 1947 and *HMS Phoebe* 1948, then as an Able Torpedoman aboard *HMS Birmingham* during Korean War, 1952-1953

**O**n board ship it's more painting than anything. Chipping paint and painting it. I got to the *Superb* in late September in Portland and had a funny experience there. I fell over the side!

We were in Portland harbour and I had a weekend's leave and I've got my little attaché case which all matelots had and at that time soap powder and all that sort of thing was still rationed and I had some in my little bag. The MFE came alongside to take us ashore to the jetty so we could catch our trains.

I was going down the Jacob's ladder which is a ladder made of rope sides and wooden slats. I got halfway down with my attaché case in one hand and trying to hold on with the other one and a rung twisted and I slid off it and went in between the MFE and the ship's side so I stood a good chance of getting squashed.



APART FROM THAT.  
DID YOU ENJOY YOUR TRIP DEAR?

I don't remember hitting the water, I might have bumped my head on the way down, but it must have been the air trapped in the overcoat I was wearing that brought me up to the surface.

We had a Gunner who was the coxswain of the MFE yelling at me in the water "Don't stay there MOVE!" I thought "Where the bloody hell can I move to?"

Anyhow they fished me out and took me back on board. I had a shower and a wash, changed my clothes and then I was allowed to go on leave. It was a very dicey day because we did lose a chap off the *Superb* at another time.

He fell off one of the duty motor boats and they found him much later.



My first impression of the *Superb* was that it was another big boat but she was never known as the *Superb* - it was always the *Super B* - and I started doing a bit of

torpedo training on there because it was mechanical. Having left school and gone to work in a garage I was interested in the goings on and what have you of the innards of a torpedo.

I didn't get a lot of training on there they just asked you what branch you want to progress in gunnery, quarter ratings, stewards. Basically it what they first ask you when you join up, Ordinary Seaman or whatever and I think I said I'll go to torpedoes.

Now for torpedoes there's a hell of a lot to learn. You've got to learn the engine; it's a water-cooled engine 4 cylinder. You use igniters to get it going. 3 igniters mustn't be the same lot number in case they're duff. You have different lot numbers so that when the hammer drops at least one of them will fire. It's charged up with 3,100 lbs per square inch air. This was the 21 inch torpedo.

You've got the warhead on the front but we used to use it for practise, blowing heads - they're filled with water and when the torpedo finishes its run the air blows the water out and makes it bob up and down.

You've got a giro in it to keep it straight and it works the horizontal rudders and by the engine you've got a depth gauge which operates by pressure and which works the vertical rudders. You could also make them zigzag like a W pattern or just go straight.

My messdeck on the *Superb* was all right we weren't a specialised messdeck there was all sorts in there as we were still training basically. It's only when you become a trained Torpedoman that you'd go in the Torpedo Mess.

For those who don't know how it was a messdeck was like a barrack room and instead of beds you've got a table with two forms for seats, one runs each side of the table where you sit for your meals. There's a locker fitted to the ship's bulkhead to keep your tea and sugar in and your bits and pieces, your mess fannies and all that type of thing.

We slept in hammocks. On board a ship you get 18 inches by about 6 feet long of space. You stretch the hammock on special bars on the messdeck and you try and make sure you're near something that you can grab hold of in order to swing yourself up and in and down and out.

I reckon the hammock is one of the most comfortable things going and I never had any trouble sleeping. Some people made a stretcher which was something like a broom handle 18 inches long with a notch cut in each end to keep the end of the hammock open at the end where your head is.

Once you'd put your hammock up you couldn't leave it there unattended if you weren't in it you had to take it down every day and lashed it up. There was a special way of lashing - you start off with an eye splice which goes over the end and then you put seven marlin hitches along the length - not 5 or 6 it had to be 7. When it was lashed up you then undid



the two ends which were on the hammock rail which you'd previously secured with sheet bends which is very easy to undo then after tucking in both rope ends under the marlin hitches you put the hammock into a hammock locker.

Now the general idea of this is if the ship did get hit or the ship's side was damaged you could then go to the hammock locker and pack the hammocks into the hole.

We had general messing as opposed to canteen messing which meant that each day or week two blokes from every mess were designated as cooks of the mess. That meant whoever was on that duty would have to go to the galley collect the meals bring them back to the mess and serve them out. On the *Superb* the meals were good and the cooks of the mess would do all the clearing up and washing up after the meal and stow everything away.

If you were old enough you got your tot which was one part rum and two parts water - grog. For this you had one bloke in the mess who was designated "Bubbly Bosun". He'd go and get it and measure it out. If you were entitled, by age, to have a tot but if you didn't have it you would get three pence a day in lieu. That really was for blokes who were Temperance. If you were UA or under age then obviously you didn't get it. I think I just scraped in by age towards the end of my stint on the *Superb*.

The Bubbly Bosun would get the rum and bring it back to the mess. He'd then pour it all out in glasses, cups, or beakers. To do this fairly he had a special measure. When he poured your tot he'd give it to you and you'd hand it back to him for him to have sippers as a thanks for going to get it.

For sippers you'd just wet your lips you don't actually drink it. You'd also have gulpers that was for someone if they'd done you a favour and you'd have a mouthful. If they done something special they might see it off which meant they'd drink the whole glassful. We used to play what's called Ludo but we used to call it Uckers and a lot of rum went on that - if you'd won you might get sippers or gulpers depending on how it went.



# The Early Years 1945 to 1948 PART 2

(by Lofty) **CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH**

**O**n 20th March, 1946 the ship moved into the main stream at 1030, turned and re-berthed, bows out, at Dufferin Dock in order to re-embark the Royal Party.



19th March, 1946 launch of HMS Belfast (note Special Branch Officer underneath platform)

Captain Robson and four other officers were invited to the Governor's Ball while 300 officers and men were invited to control the crowds at the launch of the aircraft carrier *HMS Eagle*.

Having officially launched the Royal navy's largest ever aircraft carrier the Princess re-embarked at 1050 on 21st March and we slipped and proceeded at 1100 assisted by local tugs.

The passage to Greenock was made in perfect weather conditions during which the Princess was shown around the ship.

Upon reaching the Clyde Approaches the three ships anchored in company and dressed overall at 1630. We again manned and cheered ship when the *Royal Barge* left at 1650. We then moved berth to DI Buoy at Sunset on 21st March and the first leave party was re-embarked.



Princess Elizabeth  
on Bridge of  
HMS Superb  
in Belfast  
March, 1946

On Monday 1st April, 1946 she was still at Greenock and remained there until the following Sunday when she slipped and proceeded to sea. Her destination was Gibraltar arriving there on Thursday, 11th April at 0625. There she watched as the destroyer *HMS St. Kitts* and the submarine *Truant* left harbour. Our stay at Gibraltar was brief because the next day army personnel embarked for transportation to

Malta; later that day we put to sea.



On Monday, 16th April we arrived at Grand Harbour and fired a salute to the Commander in Chief Mediterranean before securing to Number 12 Buoy. On Tuesday, 23 April at

0900 we put to sea and 20 minutes later passed the breakwater. Ten minutes later the order was given to man ship and cheer Admiral Sir John Cunningham before taking up station astern of *HMS Ajax*.

Exercises were then conducted with the cruisers *Ajax* and *Orion* and the destroyers *Volage* and *Virago* before returning to Marsaxlokk.

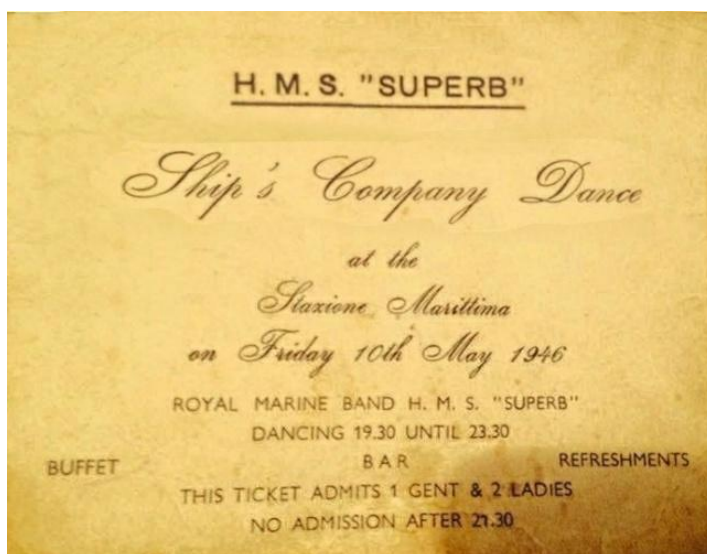
More exercises followed over the next few days and on Friday, 26th April in company with *Orion*, we set course for Italy and the naval base at Trieste. En route, on Sunday 28th, a reminder of the war in the Mediterranean was sighted when a mine was located and despite several rifle shots being fired at it, it did not detonate. The ship then communicated the mine's position to Headquarters who dispatched suitable vessels to effectively deal with the danger.



Coder Holt, Signalmen Nightingale, Burgess, Murphy, Lane & Gray Tels. Roche, Tomkins & Ward

The two cruisers arrived off Trieste on the following day and anchored offshore. The ship's company enjoyed themselves in the city but nothing compared to the scenery of Venice which was the next port of call on the itinerary. Venice was arrived on Monday, 6th May, a short trip from Trieste, but the stay was for just three days before making passage, via Trieste, to Corfu.

The 14th May saw us with the cruiser *Orion* on passage in the Corfu Channel which is a narrow corridor between the island and the Greek mainland and a regularly used shipping route. Mine clearance in this area was the



Note that each gentleman could admit 2 Ladies !

responsibility of the British Navy but due to the

political climate at the time there was considerable anti British feeling among the Albanians. An Albanian battery fired on the ships without any hits being scored - both British ships held their fire.

Naturally this brought a strong protest from the British government who were not too thrilled at having their ships fired upon. A diplomatic row between the two governments ensued which resulted in weak excuses from the Albanian President. Britain warned the Albanians there would be retaliation if British ships were fired on again. The Albanians then declared that all foreign vessels would need to have Albanian permission to sail through the Corfu Channel even in international waters.

This, of course, was rejected by the British.

During the afternoon of 22nd October the cruiser *Mauritius* with the destroyers *Saumarez* and *Volage* were in the channel with guns trained fore and aft with orders to return fire if fired upon.

During the passage in waters deemed to have been swept of mines and charted as such, a violent explosion occurred forward of the *Saumarez's* bridge as she hit a mine, this was followed by a fire. *HMS Volage* then took *Saumarez* in tow but she, in turn hit another mine which blew off her bows. These two incidents caused the deaths of 44 men and resulted in another 40 injured. Subsequently all four ships returned to harbour where the *Saumarez* was eventually scrapped and the *Volage* had her bows re-fitted.



Bill Potticary ashore with an oppo in Haifa

As a result of these incidents the Channel was immediately swept again and it was discovered that those further mines found were brand new not having been in the water for very long.

Albania was later found guilty of deploying mines by the International Court and ordered to compensate Britain the sum of £843,947 in damages. Needless to say this sum has never been paid.

On Wednesday, 15th May, 1946 we arrived in Corfu were open to the public for part of the day. Parties of schoolchildren, troops of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides swarmed on board and were entertained by the crew.



A week later on 22nd the ship's cells were utilised in confining some Greek civilians who were accused of stealing. The prisoners were taken into protective custody during the early hours and remained there until the local magistrates took them away at 1010.

On Friday 24th May the ship left port around 1500 and made passage for Malta where, on Saturday, we entered Grand Harbour for several days of rest which came to an end on 30th May when she was ordered to sail for Haifa to relieve *HMS Ajax* and where trouble had been brewing for some time. Soon, after arrival, we received a warning from the "Stern Gang" <sup>1</sup> which basically said that "If the ship doesn't leave harbour it will be blown up". On board watches were kept for underwater attacks and small explosive charges were thrown into the water at irregular intervals to deter such attacks. There was at least one incident where members of the ship's company returning from a trip to Nazareth were subject to an attempted ambush by a gang of dissidents but managed to outrun them. In the event although some hands managed to get time ashore we left harbour and the threat was resolved.

A few weeks later having returned to Malta we were again in the vicinity of Haifa anchored off shore on Monday, 3rd June where members of the ship's company assisted the local population by working in the town attempting to win hearts and minds.

On Saturday, 22 June General Pileau, with some British passengers embarked for passage to the United Kingdom and the ship put to sea in the afternoon of 23rd bound for Malta. After three days *We* entered Grand Harbour and anchored there. A mere two days were spent in harbour and on 25th we set course, via Gibraltar on 30th June, for the United Kingdom arriving in Chatham on 5th July.

We were then attached to the 10th Cruiser Squadron.

The month of July was spent in Chatham Dockyard and it wasn't until Thursday, 15th August when we sailed for Portland to exchange messages, en route, with the destroyer *HMS Solebay*.

We arrived in Portland on Friday 15th August where, already present, were the battleship *Nelson*, the cruiser *Diadem* and many other smaller vessels such as the *Opus*, *Seadevil*, *Scorcher*, *Oakum Castle*, *Tintagel Castle* and *St. James*. For the remainder of the month the ship stayed in Portland.



**TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH**

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<sup>1</sup> Extremely anti-British, the group repeatedly attacked British personnel in Palestine and during WW II even invited aid from the Axis powers.



## HAVE YOU A STORY TO TELL ?

We'd love to print your story so why not put pen to paper

It doesn't need to be a novel -  
just some of your memories  
which will eventually be lost  
forever unless told now

Several members  
have sent in their own  
& they are available to read  
on our website



# IN OTHER WORDS

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Remembered by Brian Saunders

**I** paid off the *Lion* I joined the *Orion*,  
A fairly good chance you'll allow;  
I was once in distress as cook of the  
mess,  
And Cookie and I had a row.  
For the dinner looked like a dish of black  
lead  
And with tears in my eyes to Cookie I said,

It is positively vile and deleterious,  
It is beastly insalubrious to taste,  
It is destitute of appetising flavour,  
An obnoxious heap of granulated waste.  
It is desiccated to incineration,  
Reminiscent of corrugated lime,  
It is atrophied to ashes dressed in  
mourning,  
In other words - it's a bloody waste of time.

My messmates opine I spend most of my  
time  
In front of a looking-glass  
Either cleaning my teeth or trimming my  
nails  
Or brushing my hair like a lass.  
I was cleaning to go on the beach for a  
spree  
When alas ! The old drifter shoved off  
without me.

I transgressed with inconsistent fluctuation,  
The immutable conventions of routine;  
To the bland allurements of procrastination  
I succumbed with a vacillating mien.  
I protracted matutinal ablutions  
'Till I heard the drifter's most discordant  
note,  
And through a chronological miscalculation -  
I went and missed the bloody boat.

I expressed to my grief I once broke my  
leave  
And I saw the Commander next day;  
I observed with a frown, that the motor  
broke down  
And also that I lost my way.  
The Commander then said that he had seen  
me on shore  
And he smiled for he had heard such  
excuses before.

He informed me that my statement was  
erroneous,  
A fiction quite innocuous forsooth;  
An equivocal effusion of inventions:  
A quixotic deviation from the truth.  
Inexactitudes of dubious foundation  
Ambiguous concoctions of satire  
So he said I was a base prevaricator  
In other words I was a bloody liar.



# PHOTO ALBUM



## STOKERS FROM THE 1956-57 CRUISE (Plus 1 Marine !)

A couple of photos recently sent in by Shipmate  
Charlie Beasleigh and unusually there are names for all.



Have you a photo of the Superb?

We are endeavouring to collect as many photos or newspaper cuttings  
which relate to members of the crew (that does include YOU)  
or an image of the ship itself

The reason behind this is to help complete  
the history of one of the longest serving  
(by name) British Royal Navy ships

Contact Brian Saunders, if you can help, by email



# CROSSED THE BAR

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Further details of ex shipmates (but not necessarily members of the Association) who have crossed the bar can be found on the appropriate page our website.

To go there please click [HERE](#).

## Crossed the Bar (Recently Notified)

**Len Baker who was a Leading Stoker on the 1956-57 Cruise crossed the bar in July 2014. Recently notified by his son Gary**



# PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE

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If you can assist with any of these appeals please contact Brian Saunders in the first instance. No details will be passed on to third parties without express permission. These appeals will be left in the magazine for a few

## From previous issues



as Archie

The niece of ex Stoker Petty Officer **Archibald (Archie) McAllister** would like to have any information on her uncle who served on the 1956-57 cruise **Shipmate Clive Godley has been in touch & will make contact as he was in the same mess**

Derek Baldry (Killick Sparker) would like to contact Ginger Dunne from 1956

Stoker Clive Godley would like to get in touch with old shipmates - I have his telephone number and email address so if you'd like it get back to me. (BS)

Larry Boudier who was in the Chatham field gun's crew in 1955 would like to know if anyone knows of others in that crew

Eleanor Ingalls Fochesato from New Jersey, USA would like to contact John Stevens, from the 1953 cruise to Maine, USA.

Bob Butcher known to many as "Butch" & who served on Superb between Nov 1950 to July 1951 wonders if Curly Watson is still around. He would like to make contact.

Laura Kardo researching her grandfather, Charles Harris, who served around 1951 & 1952. would like to know more about him.

Jeff , the son of Jim Stewart who was on board as a Telegraphist between 1947 & 1951, would be happy to receive any information re his dad. Jim was also on HMS Vidal in 1955



## OCTOBER IN GILLINGHAM

**T**his year our Annual reunion will start off with a short meeting, before the evening meal, of those members wives & friends present on **Friday 6th October**. At some stage during this meeting a short (12 minute) film will be shown of the cruiser Superb in San Francisco, Seattle and return to Chatham in 1955. The film hasn't been publically viewed before so although quite brief members might find it of interest.

**This year we will be having live music in the shape of a lady soloist who should keep us entertained.** Debbie, the owner, of the King Charles Hotel in Gillingham welcomes us once again for our October reunion and this is a little prompt for you to consider a night or two away.

For example the cost of a **double** room for Friday & Saturday nights would include the following

**Friday** night - 3 course meal

**Saturday** morning - Full English Breakfast (or several other choices including vegetarian)

**Saturday** night - 4 course Reunion Dinner

**Sunday** morning - - Full English Breakfast as Saturday morning

**The price for 2 nights is £130 per person**

If you can only make it for the Saturday night then the same **double** room would include the 4 course Reunion Dinner and breakfast on Sunday morning for £65 per person

Those of you who live really close might consider just coming for the Reunion Dinner on Saturday night and the cost for that is £27 per person.

Single rooms are also available - have a look at the Reservation Form for more information

If you'd like to discuss any other arrangements with the hotel please speak to Debbie





**THERE IS A LIFT TO  
ALL FLOORS  
PLEASE DON'T  
LEAVE IT TO THE  
LAST MINUTE TO  
BOOK**



**This year's Turner original STAR PRIZE is a painting of the green hulled clipper**

## **THERMOPYLAE**

In 1872 on *Thermopylae's* maiden voyage, she sailed to Melbourne in just 60 days breaking the record for this journey - only steamers had previously matched such speeds - and she was said to be the fastest ship of the day. *Cutty Sark* and *Thermopylae* in fact raced back from China on only one occasion, in 1872. The two vessels loaded alongside each other in Shanghai, then, on 26 June set off in the race to be the first ship back to London. They raced neck and neck through the South China seas before *Cutty Sark* managed to forge ahead. However, at 6am on 15 August, seven weeks into the race, *Cutty Sark* lost her rudder off the coast of South Africa so was forced to pull up for repairs. Her carpenter Henry Henderson made a temporary rudder to see them home, and the ship eventually arrived back on 19 October, nine days after *Thermopylae*. Although *Cutty Sark* didn't win the race, the ingenuity and seamanship displayed by the crew was celebrated and owner John Willis awarded carpenter Henderson £50 for saving the ship. Due to competition from steamships, both *Cutty Sark* and *Thermopylae* were driven out of the tea trade and were forced to seek other cargoes, but they would later compete in the wool run back from Australia.



# REUNION REMINDER

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A Note for Your Diary  
The next Reunion  
will be at  
The King Charles Hotel,  
Gillingham, Kent  
Friday, Saturday + Sunday  
6th to 8th October  
Be There or Be Square !

The main event i.e. The  
Dinner is held on the  
Saturday but it's also  
important to attend the  
AGM (which is informal &  
of short duration !) on the  
Friday evening if you can  
make it

The Hotel goes out of its way to make us comfortable - the cost of the 2  
nights includes Dinner, Bed & Breakfast on the Friday and Saturday &  
Breakfast on Sunday morning. There's plenty of good humour and loads of  
raffle prizes. Why not give it a whirl?





## PERSONS WHO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE

Andy **Brierley** (1954) - Derek **Baldry** (1956) - Alf **Brown** (1954) - Bob **Butcher** (1951) - Ron **Clay** (1956-57) - Bill **Cook** (1956) - Jim **Copus** (1954) - Ted **Davy** (1945 Canada) - John **Eccleston** (1956) - Mark **Field** (Son of Charlie **Field** 1946) - Clive **Godley** (1954) - Maureen Taylor (Daughter of Ron **Gray** 1946) - Phil **Grimson** (1953 & 1954) - Tony **Hacket** (1953) - Terry Hall (son of Bert **Hall** 1946) - Alan **Harmer** (1955 - 56) - Joe **Heaton** (1956) - Brian **Hill** (1954) - Emile [Coder] **Keane** (1954 - 55) - Rita Keeler (Wife of Brian **Keeler** 1954) - Charlie **Kingston** (1956) - Sharon Goodall (Daughter of Fred **Kinsey** Co-Founder 1950-52) - Ray **Lambert** (1955) - Don **Lawrence** (1954) - Peter **MacDonald** (1949-51) - Arthur **Maxted** (1951) - George **Messmer** (USN 1954 - USA) - Malcolm **Milham** (1953) - Wendy **Norman** (Wife of David Norman 1956) - Margaret Norgan (Wife of Jim **Norgan** 1946) - Frank **Nunn** (1956) - Dave **Perrin** (1954) - Debbie Richardson (Daughter of Bill **Potticary** (1952) - Brian **Saunders** (1954 - 55 France) - Will Sherwood (Son of Bill **Sherwood** 1954) - Rob **Smith** (1956) - Jeff Stewart (Son of Jim **Stewart** 1947 Australia) - Pete **Tasker** (1954) - Paul Taylor (Son of Ken **Taylor** 1954) - Brian **Turner** (Associate) - John **Voak** - John **Ward** (1953) - Jon **Willshir** (1953 Thailand)

[Click here to contact Brian Saunders](#) by email

To send an email from this page

If you are using "GOOGLE CHROME" please right click with your mouse on the link above and select "open link in new tab" otherwise just left click on the link



# MEMBERSHIP

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION ?**

THE ANNUAL FEE IS £10 & YOU WILL RECEIVE 4 NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR &  
ELIGABLE TO ATTEND REUNIONS

TELEPHONE ROBIN SMITH AT 01634 362 379

OR EMAIL HIM AT [robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk)

An **Application Form** can be downloaded [HERE](#)



**Our Chairman**



## ARCHIVED CONTENT

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THE END

