

H.M.S. SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION

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CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION, ROBIN SMITH

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ANDY BRIERLEY'S BLOG

Hello Shipmates,

To get the news Shipmate Norman Webber crossed the bar was most unexpected. I did not know him onboard, but always collided during reunions for an open exchange of views; nothing serious, but he always had a valid opinion on what one had to say, and a quick chuckle for our sort of non-service exchange.

I thought him a quiet person of value in our sort of association; summed up by a piece by Masefield:

"All I ask is a merry yarn with a fellow laughing rover
And a long sleep with sweet dreams when the long trip's over" (from Sea Fever).
Rest in Peace Norm - and the finest of epitaphs - "You will be missed".

Carrier Stop-Press.

Super Carrier No. 2 now tied alongside at Pompey dockyard, suffered a major - read total - ship's electrical power failure. The problem is so severe ship's company 'bags and baggage' had to evacuate 100 yards down the jetty to embark on Super Carrier No. 1; there is plenty of room!

'Electrical system' is a version of that fitted to the much vaunted billion pounds apiece "D" class destroyers, all of which could not be deployed until a mega-million rectification programme was/is executed; an obvious result of having all your eggs in one basket; the B.A.E. Clyde basket, our nation's 'only' warship builder.

Should you be looking for a change in R.N. fortunes from the imminent Defence Review I would suggest you look away now.

Another carrier tale: China has launched its second carrier, entirely home-built in just less than three years, to complement the second-hand item of Russian/Ukrainian design and build, named Liaoning. New construct is named Shandong. It looks very like the Liaoning, all rolled edges to flight deck and sponsons, a single Island and ski jump; to this plebe, a bit of eye candy.

The surprise to satellite watchers is - no catapults are fitted. My own feeling is provision must have been made below decks for retro fit of EMALS technology when matured. They will be bending over backwards to filch all possible information from U.S.N. experience.



China's forecast of a rapid 'six carrier' build - number three has had metal cut -, according to South China Morning Post, has been put on a stretched build time, remaining three

similar!! Makes one wonder if their new, so called, carrier buster, a hypersonic missile, had exceeded expectations on the trials, thus piling resources into carriers 'poor' perceived 'value for money'.

Another probability is, maybe they are a bit breathless trying to catch up with the U.S. navy's 'eleven' nuclear-powered carriers, plus 'nine' assault carriers, like the class act, *America Class*.

Last published annual defence budget was \$700 billion; that's serious cash; plus their carrier strike squadrons are acknowledged the world's very best.

China's defence budget is \$250 billion annually; many years will be required to catch up.

A recent news letter lamented the sale of U.K. high-tech. companies to 'foreign asset strippers'. Now departure from Europe had us informed by France, who lead the *Galileo Project*, we are no longer a member.

U.K. intellectual input, R & D plus billions of Euros contributed, to count for naught. I am staggered such conduct is legal. Also, collaboration with, principally, France, Germany, Italy and Spain on military aircraft projects, a situation since WW2, to name the models would be teaching you to suck eggs, will cease forthwith; U.K. is informed it's no longer a member in new air superiority programmes about to start. We have always been the 'wing' builder for Airbus Toulouse, a centre of excellence, whose quality and developed performance are advanced as the world's finest.

A move by Germany to arrange our exclusion from that work is underway; it is worth mega money to the U.K. plus many thousands of high tech. jobs.

I thought at the time, when we sold our share of Airbus it was a bloody stupid move by Whitehall. That antipathy towards us by the E.U. has resulted in S.A.A.B. Sweden, surprisingly Italy and Turkey, voicing the desire to create a consortium for the next generation 'air superiority aircraft'.

Turkey has worked with Lockheed U.S.A. for a long time and is considered a desirable aerospace partner, but alas, their new president is very close to Putin and has just purchased the A.A. missile system from him, so is considered not exactly in our camp now; feel he will be blackballed.

A high tech. question, decided by our new Premier, was the decision to hire Huawei communications. The other four members of the west's closest intelligence sharing club, the Anzacs, plus Canada and the U.S.A. asked us not to touch this Chinese state-owned major intelligence gathering and hacking company.



We ignored their collective opinion and advice.

To get elected the Boris sang, 'There will be lots of jam tomorrow'. I was prepared to

wait whilst the 'fat lady sang' in his new quarters! Crushing disappointment for me, he was off tune and did not understand the words.

I apologise for the politics Shipmates, would love to be sat amongst you listening to your opinions on the question, knowing the Peoples' Liberation Army - cyber section - run the business in question.

Was watching Airorash Analysis on TV; mainly because an accident occurred during the approach to U.S. base Guantanamo. Always been interested in that place, its treaty with Cuba still rigorously adhered to. The plane was a four jet freighter, four crew but no passengers, a hidden blessing as all perished. Never did manage to get a decent map of the area, perhaps being a military installation was the reason for that. The Base, in programme, filmed at great length from many angles and heights on crystal clear skies. For me an excellent education, very informative and twanged some nice memories.

I remember the enormous fish that congregated below the ship's tube space for stale loaves, I swear, some were tuna, and Pete Tasker could be wound up after all these years if I reminded him their 'rifle match versus the U.S. Marines. It was a gross embarrassment to the web-footed because they lost.

I know there were extenuating circumstances, to save both parties reputation, and he explained they used each other's rifle type. I have often wondered if U.S. used the *M1 Garand* or the later *M14*; our side, of course, had the old clunker .303 SMLE

Are any of that team on our books? I would like to know, out of interest.

Must go, Jo has just rung the dinner bell and I've not set the table.

Tatty bye Shipmates



Three men are sitting stiffly side by side on a long commercial flight.

After they're airborne and the plane has levelled off, the man in the window seat abruptly says, distinctly and confidently, in a loud voice, ' Royal Navy, Admiral, retired. Married, two sons, both surgeons.'

After a few minutes the man in the aisle seat states through a tight lipped smile, ' Royal Navy, Admiral, retired. Married, two sons, both Judges.'

After some thought, the fellow in the centre seat decides to introduce himself. With a twinkle in his eye he proclaims, 'Royal Navy, Chief Petty Officer, retired. Never married, two sons, both Admirals.'

From Stuart Omer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for the February magazine I did receive it on Saturday as well as to day, all the best from us both keep up the good work **Alf Brown**

Just enjoying the latest edition of the Mag; well done - plenty of interesting content. **Allan Harmer**

Let's try and clear this up once and for all. I joined Super B during May 1953, as a Boy 1st Class, when she came home for the Coronation Fleet Review. With that over I was made the Leading boy and Commanders Runner, in which job I got to know all the buzzes, even before they became buzzes. Just before we returned to UK Oct/Nov I was rated O.D. and moved to 3 Mess, Quarter Deck, Part of Ship.

Following the end of the Spring Cruise to Gib, we were told to rip off the old deck on the way home as we were having a wooden one installed in Chatham. The powers that be, decided it would help to fire a Broadside from 'Y' Turret which would possibly crack the compound, making it easier to chip off. Said broadside was duly fired off, much to the consternation of the 'Vanguard' who was sailing some distance away on our Port Beam, as the shells exploded almost directly overhead of her, (much flashing of signal lamps, etc)

The chipping started on an easy date to remember, 1st of April 1954. We were all issued with chipping hammers and scrappers and started off directly outside of the Commanders Office. There did not seem to be much cracking from the Gunnery, but we made steady progress.

Having gone about 10 feet or so, the Commander came out with several other officers to see how it was going. Then the Yeoman of Signals appeared with his clipboard and showed it to the Cdr, whose face turned white, looking at the Signals Officer he said "Have you seen this"? It's cancelled". All the assembled officers had a look at the signal and pulled sad faces. The Yeoman held his hand out to take back the clipboard and with a straight face said "Have you looked at the DTG sir", at which point the group burst out laughing, it being 'All Fools Day'.

On arrival in 'Chats' we finished the job and by the time we returned from Easter leave much of the wooden deck had been laid and very soon the Duty Watch were scrubbing first thing in the morning. I left the ship in August 1954, on my way to 'Dryad' and another 'Blue Card' job as an RP3/Navigators Yeoman on the 'Chieftain'. **Malcolm Milham**



MEMORIES OF NORMAN WEBBER

Such a lovely genuine gentleman made me welcome on our very first meeting. R.I.P Norman. Will miss you. **Sharon Goodall** (via Facebook)

That's so sad spent many reunions in his company a true gentleman. R.I.P. Oppo. **Brian Hill** (via Facebook)

Very sorry to hear of the death of Norman Webber. He was a smashing guy. He came up to visit us a few years ago to look at my model Super B. Then he kindly took Marg and me out for lunch at a local pub - good memories. He then travelled on to see his friend and ours, Gordon Truett. A very sad loss - he'll be really missed at the Super B association in October. **Marg & Brian Turner**

My experience talking with Norman, he was a very nice gentleman. Looking at the last reunion photograph there are not many of us left...gentlemen I mean. **Bill Cook**

So sorry to hear the sad news of Norman the last thing he said to me was "See you next year 1300. Don't be late !" So sad my family also got to know him - we will miss him. **Joe Heaton**

Sad news indeed about Norman Webber. Norman was in a close group of four when I first attended the reunion and it was to this group that Ron Clay and I became sort of satellites. Norman's passing sees the finale of those original four. **Allan Harmer**



1 Gordon Truett 2 Fred Kinsey 3 Pat Hayes 4 John Gaynor 5 Norman Webber



NOZZERS GO WEST

Part 9

Soon the call came to secure from entering harbour stations, but if they thought that was the end of their involvement for the day, they were sadly mistaken. Pots of paint appeared as if summoned by some unspoken command and, having changed at breakneck speed, they found that those paint pots and brushes were earmarked 'Boys - for the use of'.

This, apparently, was the pattern of things to come. Every time they entered harbour, or sometimes even on the way in, they were told it would become routine to give everything a coat of paint. No wonder navy ships always looked spick and span. Now they had firsthand knowledge of why they always looked that way.

Their entrance to the old dilapidated, and now largely defunct dockyard, acted like a starting pistol with everything starting to happen at once, almost as if there was not a moment to lose. This frantic turn of speed continued for two days until, on Sunday, *Superb* 'officially' took over with a parade of both ship's companies alongside the ships and the transfer of the Admiral's flag. At the same time the Captain assumed rank of Commodore.

After the handing over parade on Sunday came a poignant moment when the *Sheffield* disengaged herself from the wall and headed out into the blue sea for her journey home. This time it was the *Superb* that did the bulk of the cheering as the strains of *Auld Lang Syne* drifted over to them from *Sheffield's* Royal Marine Band, after completion of their fifteen gun salute.



Transferring the Queen's Colours, Bermuda 17 Oct 1954

Ginger felt a lump in his throat, particularly when *Superb's* gun replied with a twelve gun salute. It was like saying 'Goodbye' to an old friend although he knew no one aboard the *Sheffield*.

In the two days the two crews had mingled with each other on the dockside, he had formed no acquaintanceships but somehow the moment got to him. For some reason that he didn't understand, he felt sad and looking around at the adjacent faces, he could see he wasn't the only one. He had no thoughts about going home, he was quite happy with his lot but the sense of occasion and the music got to him.

Sheffield's departure has left a void. The anticlimax was deafening. He now realised that, despite his temporary sadness, the morning's activities had given him a buzz. The parade, the band and then *Sheffield's* departure, now his bubble burst and he acknowledged that life must go on.

Ginger had been detailed quarterdeck part-of-ship and naturally, that entailed working on the quarterdeck. As if scrubbing the wooden decking, first thing every morning on their way over from England, was not bad enough, they now found that was their primary task every day. They also learnt that holystoning - the art of keeping the wooden decks clean by scrubbing on their hands and knees, along the grain with a stone block about the size of a house brick - had not died out with sailing ships but was still in constant use, particularly on the *Superb's* quarterdeck. Every forenoon boys had to line up at one end of the quarterdeck and, taking one plank each, holystone scrub their way to the other end amid torrents of water from the fire hydrant. The fact it had been scrubbed only an hour earlier made no difference whatsoever.

Then all that remained was, if the awnings were not rigged they had to be put up, the mushroom head air vents polished and the scuppers up either side washed out and dried off in case the officers decided to invite visitors aboard during the afternoon.

It was then that their routine altered and they were told that they would only be required for early morning scrubbing on alternative days. But if they thought that signalled a lie-in on the other days, those thoughts were dashed when they all still had to rise at the same time with one watch going to the scrubbing party and the other watch going for a swim or a jog around the dockyard. The idea of a swim at six a.m. did not fill them, with joy but there was no way to avoid it. Just ahead of the ship was a small grassy bank leading down to the water's edge and that, despite their reluctance at first, was where they spent many happy hours just splashing about and enjoying themselves. It was better than scrubbing wooden decking and, as they were not allowed to stay in their hammocks anyway, it was the next best thing.

Then, ten days later and after much more chipping, painting, holystoning and swimming, it was time to show their face and meet the public. Like *Sheffield* before them, they manoeuvred out through the breakwater and into the blue sea, but unlike *Sheffield*, their destination was to take them in the opposite direction and to the unknown waters of Cuba.

To be continued next month



Nursery Rhymes for the 21st Century

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
The structure of the wall was incorrect
Now he's got 10 grand from Claims Direct

LONG FORFOTTEN FOUL UPS



By John (Sharky) Ward

Some memories make you feel good inside but some make you shudder a bit, you know the ones when you are alone with your thoughts and you wince and call yourself some kind of prat.

Times when you've been given a chance - and - fluffed it. " One day you are the dog and the next day you are the lamp post " kind of thing ?

I hadn't been to *H.M.S. Ganges* for long when I was down to one number 8 working shirt as the other one had been stolen. The storeroom was full of floor polish, black lead and bags full of rags that we would tear up to put a shine on anything and everything and in the Ragbag were some number 8 shirts that had belonged to lads that for some reason were not there anymore. So in my wisdom it seemed to me that they were a gift.


I stood there amongst the others quite openly picking out the name stitched on the shirt I was supposed to destroy, when the P.O. came through the door and I ended up with 14 days punishment for stealing.

I was only about 4ft 10½; a skinny little 15 year old with about 17 others doing the " Shotley Shuffle " up and down Laundry Hill.

I could never work out why they made you wear your Sports Kit to work in the galley scrubbing galley trays. In those days there wasn't stuff like washing-up liquid it was soft soap then and wire wool.

Why the Sports Kit? Possibly because, with the grease, you got it so dirty you had a really difficult job to get it clean enough for inspection.

I hold the dubious record of having received 6 strokes of the cane on my last day of school for fighting so I wasn't averse to scrapping. Anyway, a few weeks after my thieving "do", I was up & down Laundry Hill for another 14 pennyworth this time for chinning a jumped-up "Badge Boy" who had the audacity to call me a bastard, a term that I now find endearing, but not then.

 Pussy, Pussy, Pussy, it's the one subject talked and boasted about continually from sunup to sundown by boys, and I, having an enquiring mind, thought that one of the several young girls from Ipswich who came to visit the Shotley Foreshore could enlighten or advise me on different aspects I couldn't quite understand .

While I was busy being enlightened the time was scooting past and when the three of us lads wandered back we were told that they had been looking for us everywhere and we were absent without permission

Both boys were named Scott and both were Geordies and as we were supposed to be the Skeleton Leave Party we were lined-up in front of some Lieutenant Commander,

We stood there in front of him decorated with love bites, lipstick and the stink of some perfume that probably cost 2/6 a gallon. He enquired as to where we had been and Joe Scott stated that we were down on the foreshore chasing rabbits and didn't know it was getting late. I thought yeah! I'm sure he going to buy this!

Joe wasn't really thinking on his feet, Perhaps that's one that would have gone down well in his home of Newcastle. We were asked if we wanted to accept punishment from him or wait till the Skipper came back. We chose now and that was another mistake.

I found unlike some others who went through *Ganges* that there was an undercurrent of downright nastiness that came to the surface and at times some of it boarded near sadism, we were awarded with 6 cuts of the cane each.

Held down by a pig of a Petty Officer over a chair this 6ft Master of Arms laid into it with glee, the cane was a thick one and left my backside black, blue and yellow and grooved like an Anderson shelter.

Perhaps I was number 3 in line but he really put his back into it. I do remember that he had worked up a sweat and later when the boys back in the mess saw it they remarked about the blood.

Since then I've seen a load of porn on the net and now realise that at the least they should have paid for the sexual excitement we gave them.

Some may be of the opinion that it taught me a valuable lesson? Well it didn't, because weeks later another misdemeanour got me another 6 cuts! It's always seemed strange to me that some who served at *Ganges* look upon their time there with happiness

Some of the Gunnery Petty Officers had been in WW2 and had been put on the Reserve List and demobbed. They had probably just got settled in Civvy Street when they were called-up yet again for the Korean War so they were not of a good disposition. They probably couldn't make a go of it outside the mob anyway.



They'd issued me with boots that were too tight giving me blisters that turned bad , I was so naïve I actually told the P.O. that I had taken them to the shoe repair shop to be stretched a bit whilst on leave, he put me on a charge for defacing government property,

that got me 14 days punishment. Those G.I.s were the same as police and they only associated with other G.I.s. Just as the old song goes "All Coppers Haven't any Fathers!"

Who remembers the Shower Routine? When you finished you had to go stand in front of a P.O. with a torch who ordered "Back, Fore & Aft" and you were made to bend over to have your bottom inspected then receive a strike of a thin cane leaving a red mark just like a bar code to make sure you'd been through when checked later.

On one occasion after the P.O. decided one of the lads was letting the mess down the unfortunate boy was taken outside in the "Covered Way" by some in my Anson Division and scrubbed with hard brooms. I still remember his name and he probably still lives in his home town of Gillingham.

Can you think of anywhere that 15 & 16 year old boys would go through that nowadays? I still remember the first couple of days in the Annex with two kids sitting on the end of their beds sobbing, and they were from the local Borstal.

This was in 52/53 when if a girl got herself knocked-up she could end up spending her life in a mental hospital; these were heady days for the Roman Catholic Church especially in Southern Ireland.

In my mess a Geordie tried to "work his ticket" by drinking a bottle of marking fluid to wash down a handful of gramophone needles and a Maltese lad topped himself over in Blake division, If someone ever got hold of the files - that's if they kept any? Talk about a best seller!


I suppose there will be some who are going to say that I must have been in a different navy, "I never heard of anything like that".

My answer to that is you must have been a really "good little boy" or have a stunted memory. Or perhaps you had been struck too many times on the head by the P.O.s. with a *Stonnicky*, that piece of back-spliced rope they carried with them to educate you on the finer points of seamanship.

Looking back now I suppose they carried on with the tried and trusted method of turning what they were given into sailors.

At home I had more or less free reign growing up during the war, nearly complete freedom as the teachers were too old for call-up and most of the men were away at war anyway.

I well remember being ordered by the C.P.O., with others, to go over the side of the Cutter we were sailing and push. As I had never been in a boat sailing in my short life and there was water

 each side for what seemed miles, and how the hell was I to know anything about sandbars?

I greeted that order from C.P.O. Merryweather with a disbelieving broad grin showing that I appreciated his sense of humour. I think that was the closest I ever got to having my head ripped off!

So I went in and got my feet wet!

Tired of constantly being broke, and stuck in an unhappy marriage, a young husband decided to solve both problems by taking out a large insurance policy on his wife (with himself as the beneficiary), and arranging to have her killed.

A friend of a friend put him in touch with a nefarious underworld figure, Artie the Assassin; Artie explained to the husband that his going price for snuffing out a spouse was 5,000 quid. The husband said he was willing to pay that amount, but that he wouldn't have any cash on hand until he could collect his wife's insurance money.

Artie insisted on being paid SOMETHING up front. The man opened up his wallet, displaying the single pound coin that rested inside. Artie sighed, rolled his eyes, and reluctantly agreed to accept the quid as down payment for the dirty deed. A few days later, Artie followed the man's wife to the local Tesco's. There, he surprised her in the produce department, and proceeded to strangle her with his gloved hands.

As the poor unsuspecting woman drew her last breath, and slumped to the floor, the manager of the produce department stumbled unexpectedly onto the scene. Unwilling to leave any witnesses behind, Artie had no choice but to strangle the Produce Manager as well.

Unknown to Artie, the entire proceedings were captured by hidden cameras and observed by the store's security guard, who immediately called the police. Artie was caught and arrested before he could leave the store.

Under intense questioning at the police station, Artie revealed the sordid plan, including his financial arrangements with the hapless husband.

And that is why, the next day in the newspaper, the headline declared:

ARTIE CHOKES TWO FOR A POUND AT TESCO'S



BACK IN 1956 Part 3

BAHREIN

The passage northwards at high speed became progressively more hot and uncomfortable as the sun was, for the most part, directly overhead. The forecastle was washing down continuously and scuttles below this deck could seldom be opened to help ventilate the ship. Worst sufferers were the Royal Marines whose Barracks was the hottest living space on the ship.

Spirits fell to low ebb when a signal was intercepted from C-in-C saying that owing to operational commitments, the East African Cruise would have to be cancelled although there was hope of a modified cruise later.

Whilst at Bahreïn, work went on to clean up the ship and carry out repairs in the Engine Room Department. Every opportunity was taken to land sport parties at Jufair and Awali and the ship's swimming pool at *H.M.S. Jufair*. Then came the glad news that *Superb* was no longer required in the Gulf and once more the ship sailed back to Trincomalee, but this time happy in the knowledge that would be no more snap recalls—at least until the East African Cruise was over.

TRINCOMALEE

On passage back to Trincomalee, *Superb* carried out exercises and gun firing *Loch Fada* as part of the very much belated work-up. During the next three weeks at Trincomalee, further evolutions and exercises were carried out with the frigate until, at last, it was decreed that the ship was now fully 'worked up'. During the work up, dockyard officials and R.A.F. Officers and Other Ranks were embarked to give them some sea time and an idea of what a cruiser can do. All declared themselves duly impressed and said how much they appreciated the Navy taking them to sea.



The ship's company would now sample the pleasures of swimming at Nicholson Lodge, steak egg and chips at the A.B.C.D. followed by a Tiger (or two) at the Canteen. Several bus trips were organised to places of historic interest near Trincomalee as well as numerous banyan parties.

Came the eagerly awaited 5th June and with feverish activity, the Staff retinue and all their

gear and equipment were embarked. In the afternoon the Admiral and Lady Norris came on board and the ship slipped and headed west for Africa.

SIGHTSEEING IN CEYLON

Is there anyone in the old *Superb* who has not roasted himself one or the other of Trinco's beaches? Perhaps some of those who chose the wrong beaches won't wish to be reminded of the



sand flies anyway. Do you remember those little black smudges? It was astounding that anything so small could make itself felt for so long afterwards. But, sand flies or no, those afternoon on Trinco's beaches were very pleasant indeed.

What next? The Kandy Perahera. That was really worth describing and deserves the space given to it in another part of the magazine. The elephants and the flickering torch lights, the huge crowds, the bare-chested dancers and the clash of cymbals. One felt as if the very old East had come back into its own for one night, forgetting about motor cars and electric lights. The noise of the crowds milling past the hotel windows, and the light glistening on Kandy's lake. And that drive back! Oh, my word!

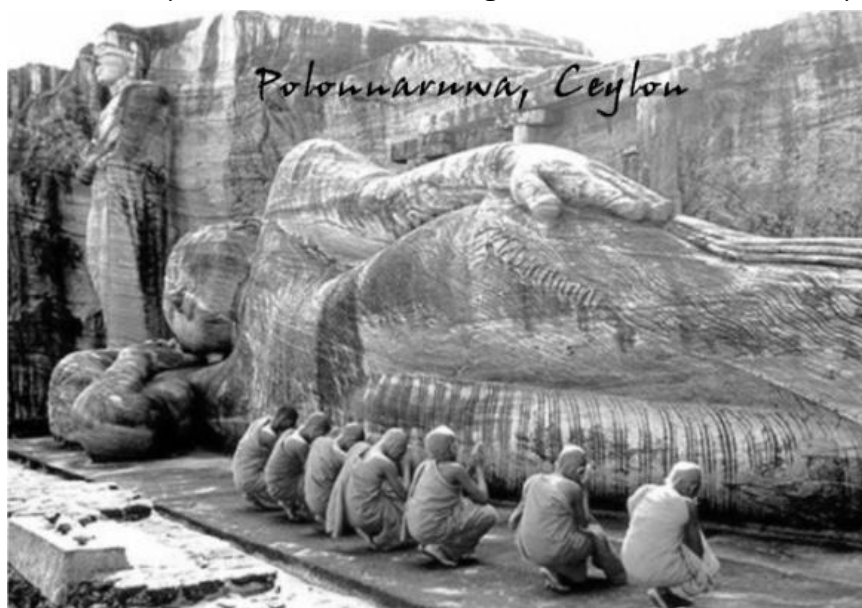


Another outing that will not forgotten by those who went on it was the long hike from China Bay to Nilavelli, through the jungle. Starting at eight, the morning cool and the going relatively easy, the first six mile to the Hot Well Springs was done in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, even

thought the paths followed were not those shown on the map. By 10.30, after a short rest and cup of local coffee and goat's milk, the party set off down the main road, looking for the turning off which would lead to the river and the way to Nilavelli. It was getting very much hotter. The river, when it was found, was completely dry. The bed consisted entirely of coarse, loose sand, in which one's feet sank two or three inches and each step was twice the effort required on firm ground. Around midday it was very hot indeed. The river bed seemed to go on to infinity and nearly everyone had drunk his water. At about 13.00 the river should have run into a large lake surrounded by open paddy, with Nilavelli Beach only three miles further on. Well, believe it or not, that was the first circular river the party had ever come across. At about 16.00 some very tired people eventually staggered down to the beach and wearily struggled into swimming gear.

All those who went walking or cycling will bear me out when I say there were some very attractive country just off some of the main roads round Trincomalee. There was the huge, almost dried up, tank or reservoir near China Bay. The floor was carpeted in green grass and the herds of cows grazing among the big trees made it seem like an English park. From there to the Hot Well Springs was a pleasant three hours walk through thick thorn scrub, jungle and forest. In some parts only the sight of elephant droppings made it seem any different from the New Forest. Then there were some pretty villages up by Nilavelli, situated among large coconut plantations.

One could get a good idea what Ceylon's northern districts were like by going on one of the excursions to Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa or Sigirya. The shockingly bad roads tended to give a jaundiced view of the Sinhalese landscapes, and the drought took a lot of the pleasantness out of the scenery. However, towards the end of our time, during the rains, the jungle and paddy became very attractive. An outing to one of those three places was well worth while, as much



for the change as anything else. The 36 seater-bus took most of the punishment handed out by the roads very well. The 300 or so people who went from the *Superb* on one or other of these excursions must have been impressed by the remains they saw of Ceylon's old civilisations; that group of enormous stone Buddhas at Polonnaruwa, for example, or the Ruwanweli dagaba at Anuradhapura, just restored and

newly whitewashed. Others found the frescoes at Sigirya more interesting than anything else. Whatever one's taste, the trips were good value and the break from routine was pleasant.

Of all the beaches in Ceylon the best was at Mount Lavinia. One could hardly ask for more than a good hotel, pleasant scenery, good changing rooms, fresh lime to drink and pineapples to eat and, of course, a beach. The drive down to Mount Lavinia was pleasant as well, showing one practically every aspect of Colombo from multiple stores in the Fort to shanties in the Pettah.

I don't know which aspects of our outings in Ceylon were enjoyed most, and although every banyan and excursion turned out to be different from expectations, the bad parts had their compensations. Whatever the result, there always plenty of laughs. Will we ever forget camping on Sober Island, or cooking lunch on the beach at Seat Bay, or sitting in the Guest House at Polonnaruwa looking out the beautiful lake? Even the drive up to Diyatalawa was full of amusement as when we knocked down a cyclist just outside Kandy. The driver put up a great fight, and only after 45 minutes of argument did he agree to pay compensation- two rupees!

Photos kindly supplied by Phil Grimson & Stock Photos.



Nursery Rhymes for the 21st Century

Jack and Jill went into town
To get some chips and sweeties
Now he can't keep his heart rate down
And she's got diabetes

THE BARE FACTS OF CHATHAM NAAFI



by Tony Hackett

Tony read the article about the closing of the night club which was part of the King Charles Hotel in Gillingham (the Old NAAFI) in last August's magazine and it prompted the following tale. Hope you enjoy reading it.

Tony and Sylvia had just been married but time and tide waits for no man and his immediate recall to duty was due.

Sylvia rendezvoused with me at Fenchurch Street railway station in London where the Naval Railway Transport Officer had laid on a van to take us both to London Bridge station. I had my hammock, kitbag, holdall and suitcase to carry so was pleased for Sylvia's assistance.

Sylvia shouldn't have travelled in the van but the R.T.O. turned a blind eye and on arrival, we caught the train for Chatham.



Transport was waiting at the station to take me to the barracks and I asked if I could call at the NAAFI with my wife to make sure she booked in properly, but as there were other personnel on the bus, my request was refused. I had just a few minutes to get her a taxi and say goodbye. I told her I would try and get shore leave as soon as possible.

It was three days before I managed to get leave and discover the problem she had experienced at the NAAFI.

When a wife books in to stay at the section reserved for naval families, they have to produce their naval marriage allowance book. Having only been married a few days Sylvia didn't have



one. She was only allowed to stay after a telephone call was made to the Foxton vicar confirming her status as a naval wife.

The NAAFI was a comparatively new building and the section reserved for naval families was also used by the WRNS (Wrens). The rooms overlooked the United Services Rugby Ground where I had played in a game for them against Harlequins RFC last time I was in barracks.

The rooms were well furnished though, in common with most hotel rooms of the period, not en-suite. The bathroom and toilets were almost opposite our room and one morning I went to the toilet about 7 o'clock. I closed our bedroom door knowing that Sylvia would be awake to let me back in.

As was my custom in those days I didn't wear any pyjamas. A quick glance along the corridor told me the coast was clear and I dashed to the toilet in the nude. On return I knocked gently on our room door expecting Sylvia to open it immediately but nothing happened. So I knocked louder. Still nothing happened and I started to panic.

There was a glass panel above the door and by standing on the door handle I could see Sylvia fast asleep.

Furious knocking on the glass produced no response from her at all. By now, I could hear sounds of movement from adjacent rooms and it wasn't long before the Wrens started to leave their rooms.

At each sound of a door opening I dashed back into the toilet until I thought the coast was clear enough for me to return and again knock loudly on our door. This went on for ages as more and more Wrens left for work.

Getting cold and desperate, I once more stood on the door handle to see if there was any movement from Sylvia. Sod's Law ensured that whilst there two Wrens came out of the adjacent door and caught me in the act.

What went through their minds seeing a naked man standing on a door handle peering through a glass panel I shall never know. I would like to think the shriek they let out was more in delight than fright!

After they disappeared, I threw caution to the wind, and hammered on the door until Sylvia woke up and let me in.

We had been married just five days - it was almost the shortest marriage in history.



PHOTO ALBUM

The fastest capital ship ever to serve in the Royal Navy saw active duty in two world wars from the Arctic Ocean to the South Atlantic, from the western Mediterranean through the Indian Ocean and into the western Pacific. She truly earned her "Galloper" title. HMS Renown in 1943:



Thoughts of Shipmate Bill Cook

Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?



CROSSED THE BAR



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](#)



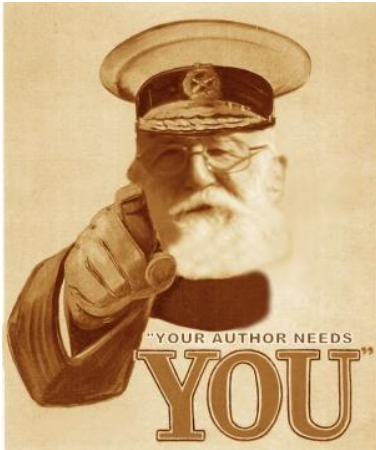
Crossed the Bar (Recently Notified)

Shipmate Norman Webber a regular attendee of our reunions, on February, 2020. Norman was an ERA on the Africa Cruise.



SLOPS

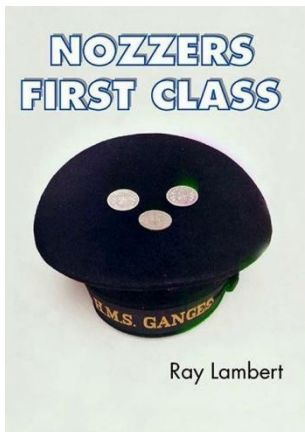
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NOZZERS GO WEST



Ray Lambert



Something for the Youngsters

Phil Grimson

DOGBREATH the Dragon



Shipmate Phil Grimson offers his latest book for sale targeted at children from 8 years upward. It is a magical tale of chivalry which should enchant most youngsters and lead them into a make-believe world where

there's fierce and fiery combat when a princess is captured by a dragon.

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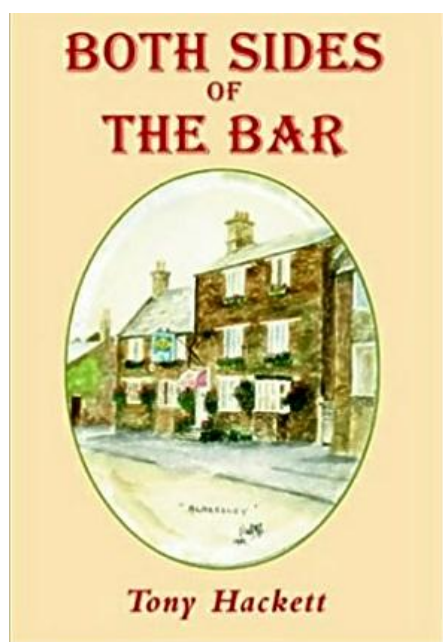
Phil can be contacted by email by clicking on this [LINK](#)

*** IF YOU CONTACT PHIL DIRECTLY YOU CAN BUY THE PAPERBACK BOOK FOR ONLY £12.50 + P&P AND PHIL WILL DONATE £1 TO THE HMS SUPERB (CRUISER) ASSOCIATION FUNDS**



Life After the Navy

Tony Hackett



Tony, the son of a police officer, joined the Royal Navy aged 15 and spent the next 10 years travelling the world. He entered Civvy street in 1959 and went into the pub trade. This book relates Tony's endeavours in balancing his life between his love of rugby, managing often run-down pubs and his love of the sea and finally his successful ownership of his own free-house.

An interesting insight into the trials and tribulations of being self employed.

Available as a hard back book from Amazon at £12.99

PEOPLE SEARCH FOR PEOPLE

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 months

The son of **Jim (James) Johnstone** asks if anyone knew his father - a Royal Marine on the 1954-55 cruise



- **Stoker Stephen (Steve) Maddison** (1946-47) and still going strong at 92 asks if anyone remembers him.
- **Keith (Danny) Lambert** was a stoker on board the 1954-55 cruise and is looking for old oppos. Hopefully he will join the Association.

From previous issues

The following message received from Derek Thompson, via Facebook

Just wondered if any of you gents knew my father **Derrick Thompson (Tommo)** he was a stoker mechanic (E) 1st class on board HMS Superb in 1955/56. He passed away in 2003 aged 72. I myself was in the Andrew and served for 23 yrs. I would be grateful if anyone knew him

Neil Cooper, the son of Terry Willey, writes

"My late father appears to be mentioned in the booklet from the 52-53 tour of West Indies. He's stated as leading electricians mate. His full name was **Terry Keith Willey**. Be great to hear from anyone who knew him"

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.

ARCHIVED CONTENT

Past Copies of the Magazine can be accessed on-line by clicking on the appropriate month

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

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

