



The Rum Tub or Norrie's Nocturnal and Nautical Natter

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A wise person once said....

We all love to spend money buying new clothes but we never realize that the best moments in life are enjoyed without clothes. (My Favourite)

Having a cold drink on a hot day with a few friends is nice, but having a hot friend on a cold night after a few drinks - PRICELESS. (Ditto).

Breaking News: Condoms don't guarantee safe sex anymore. A friend of mine was wearing one when he was shot dead by the woman's husband. (Ooops).

Arguing over a girl's bust size is like choosing between Molson, Heineken, Carlsberg, & Budweiser. Men may state their preferences, but will grab whatever is available. (How true).

ANDé é é é é

A recent study found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it! (Yikes)

HMS Ulster

Rum Tub

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Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen



Hi! Shipmates,

Well Christmas is over for another year (Thank goodness I can almost hear some of you say!) and we are all still here to enjoy another year. I guess Christmas time is really a time for the small and younger children, but as we grow older unless we have been fortunate enough to have grand and great grandchildren it almost seems like any other day.

The thing I hate most about the festive season is the overcrowded stores, being pushed and shoved, aisles blocked with discarded shopping trolleys, I say discarded, and I am of course talking about shoppers who leave their carts piled high and across the aisles blocking access to other shoppers whilst they disappear to other parts of the store. However the moment you move their carts out of the way they appear almost frothing at the mouth and often are quite rudely abusive because you dared to move their trolley out of your way.

People can be very rude and I don't just mean the younger generation, in fact they are often much politer than older folk. Nothing irritates me more than to hold the door open for someone and they breeze past like I am the doorman with not a word of thanks, same when you stand aside to let someone pass, you are totally ignored – I often say quite loudly "You are very welcome", this either gets a sheepish embarrassed grin, a mouthful of abuse or being totally ignored.

I guess the age of chivalry and good manners is about dead.

The way I see it anyway!

Female Medical Examination

During a lady's medical examination, the British doctor says, "Your heart, lungs, pulse and blood pressure are all fine. Now let me see the part that gets you ladies into all kinds of trouble."

The lady starts taking off her undies but is interrupted by the doctor.

"No! No! Leave your knickers on..... Just stick out your tongue!"

Small Ships!

Submitted by Shipmate John Soanes

During my fourteen years RN service, I always opted for small ships when completing my drafting preference form. I never served in any ship larger than a destroyer, which in my day were said to be *small* ships and those that served in destroyers and frigates were generally known as *small ship sailors*. As everyone is well aware destroyers and frigates usually displaced no more than about 2000 tons some much less, others like the later Battle Class about 2300 tons.

Then along came the Daring class of the 1950's which were much larger, and now of course the Type 45 destroyers which are almost the size of a post war cruiser!

Even these large destroyers have been superseded in size by the United States latest stealth *destroyer* USS Zumwalt at 15,000 tons.



But **now** - The Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) have a new *destroyer* well into her initial six month sea trials. This ship named JDS IZUMO is the largest warship built in Japan since World War 2 displacing over 24,000 tons. The vessel is described as a *helicopter carrying destroyer*, it boasts a flight deck with no less than five helicopter landing sites and can accommodate *fourteen helicopters*! This *destroyer* also has the potential to be adapted for amphibious operations and could even be adapted to operate take off and vertical landing (STOVL) fixed wing aircraft.

The Chinese describe it as an aircraft carrier in disguise! Looking at the picture I think we can all understand why!



A glass of wine

To my friends who enjoy a glass of wine and those who don't and are always seen with a bottle of water in their hand:

As Benjamin Franklin said:

In wine there is wisdom, in beer there is freedom, in water there is bacteria.

In a number of carefully controlled trials, scientists have demonstrated that if we drink

1 litre of water each day, at the end of the year we would have absorbed more than 1 kilo of Escherichia coli, (E. coli) - bacteria found in faeces. In other words, we are consuming 1 kilo of poop annually.

However, we do **NOT** run that risk when drinking wine & beer

(Or rum, whiskey or other liquor) because alcohol has to go through a purification process of boiling, filtering and fermenting.

Remember: Water = Poop, Wine = Health Therefore, it's better to drink wine and talk stupid, than to drink water and be full of S***.

There is no need to thank me for this valuable information: I'm doing it as a public service.

THE CHINA FLEET CLUB – PRE-WAR YEARS

Thanks to Ken Jones (HMS Tenby Association) & with permission from Russ Graystone (RAN www.gunplot.net)

Editor's note: I will be running "The China Fleet Club" in three parts as it is a very long article.

THE ROYAL NAVY first came to Hong Kong at the request of the British opium merchants based at Canton whose ever increasing business, made illegal by successive Chinese Emperors, was jeopardised by the actions of one Special Imperial Commissioner for the suppression of the opium trade. In one week he had confiscated 20,291 chests of opium causing the merchants to seek shelter in the bays of several neighbouring islands, one of which was Hong Kong.

During January and March 1840 several Naval Actions took place which forced the Chinese to the conference table. A convention was finally agreed upon which allowed the British to take possession of Hong Kong island on January 26th 1841.

The home government, however, was not satisfied. Further expeditions between October and December 1841 resulted in many Chinese cities being taken, the Grand Canal being blocked, and the Fleet lying off outside Nanking.

By the Treaty of Nanking of August 1842, the British Merchants gained the freedom they wanted, and the Jewel of Hong Kong was added to the British Crown.

Hong Kong meant many different things to many different people over the 150 odd years of its status as a British Crown Colony. To some it has meant the view from the Peak, to others the magnificent harbour or the crowded shopping areas of Tsim Sha Tsui. To the ratings of the Royal and Commonwealth Navies, however, for over 50 years it meant the **CHINA FLEET CLUB**.

Establishing the naval base

SOON AFTER THE British Crown took possession of Hong Kong in 1841 the Naval Authorities began to erect buildings along the foreshore of the original West Point site and on a new site in Central, which was to prove to be the permanent one. While store depots

were established ashore, the Navy also made use of a succession of ships moored in the harbour, until 1897 when HMS Tamar arrived. This ship gave her name to the present dockyard and was scuttled in 1941 prior to the Japanese occupation in WWII.

The dockyard continued to expand entailing an increase in personnel and for the first time, in 1859, it appeared in the Navy list under the heading of "HM Victualling Yard" as well as under "Dockyard".

In January 1861 when Britain acquired the Kowloon peninsula the Navy gained a site for a coal storage yard and Stonecutters Island as a quarantine area. The remainder of the century passed with no apparent change in the yards.

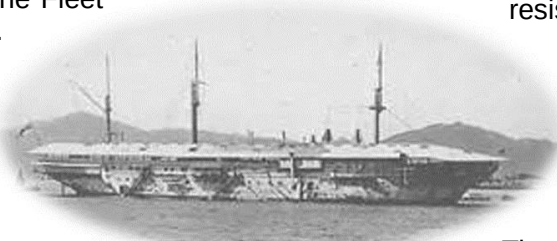
In December 1901 additional land was purchased to the north of the Kowloon yard, again for coal storage, and the site in Central was slowly expanded to cater for the rapidly growing Naval presence.

Many wanted the Navy to move all its facilities to the Kowloon yard, but the Admiralty resisted and both sites remained Naval property until October 1959 when the Kowloon yard was handed back to the civil authorities.

The Central sited dockyard was surrounded on all sides by Army barracks which jealously guarded their land and would not allow any further expansion along the shore line - the only possible way to expand was seaward reclamation. In 1902 the foundation stone for the extension was laid and by 1908 39 acres had been created.

The new sea walls were 4,580 feet long and included a floating basin and a graving dock. The basin, designed to have an area of 9 acres and a depth at the lowest Spring tide of 30 feet, today is a well-known landmark along Hong Kong's crowded foreshore.

The graving dock could take three submarines side by side at one time. The dry dock was eventually filled in October 1959



THE ORIGINAL HMS TAMAR

and all that remains today is the memorial stone taken from its head. This stone, with its brass inscription can be seen in a small garden in today's base.

The dockyard was under Japanese control from the surrender on 25th December 1941 until Admiral Harcourt and a very strong fleet arrived to repossess it on 30th August 1945. In September Admiral Harcourt was appointed Commander in Chief of Military Administration.

The Navy proved to be invaluable to the rehabilitation process, helping civilian organisations, providing medical aid and maintaining Law and Order. More important even for morale was the way the service brought a welcome return to normality to the social scene by organising children's parties, dances and even cricket matches.

A key role in the Navy's own social life, and in that of the Hong Kong community in general, was played by the China Fleet Club which had been established in the mid-1930's and really began to come into its own with the post-war years.

The natural culmination to all this was Victory Day on October 9th when the march past, outside the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank took 15 minutes.

On November 28th 1957 it was announced that the Naval dockyard would be closed down. The reason given being that there was no future requirement for a full scale dockyard in Hong Kong due to the reorganisation of Naval forces. However to soften the blow the yard was to be

run down over a two year period.

Though the dockyard had closed there was still a considerable Naval presence that had to be contained within the restricted area the Admiralty would retain. It was with some surprise that in August 1959 the public learned that the Navy had retained a toe-hold in Central and a sizeable portion of its old water front. The Colony learnt that the Hong Kong Government had agreed to pay £7 million for the Royal Navy Dockyard and Kowloon Naval Yard, to pay \$210,000 for a

wall around the new yard and half the cost of walling up the dry dock.

The new HMS Tamar, and fifth in line, gradually emerged between 1959 and 1962 in the form of a compact, modern Naval Base between Harcourt Road and the water front. The road, de-signed to link Connaught Road and Gloucester Road was completed in 1961, and built across former dockyard land. On either side old naval buildings were pulled down and used to fill in the dry dock. The buildings of the Tamar Section were left to the last but by 1962 the new office accommodation and quarters were ready in the western end of the base and transfer was made across the few hundred yards from the eastern end.

The tower block was completed in 1978 on the site of the old dockyard workshops, and was opened on the 4th March 1979 by the Prince of Wales. The seafront to the East of the basin was reclaimed and in 1986 the new workshops were built.

The First China Fleet Club - The Royal Naval Canteen

UNTIL THE CHINA Fleet Club was opened in 1934 the Royal Naval Canteen looked after the recreational needs of the Men of the Fleet in Hong Kong. That predecessor of today's Club, even before the First World War, was situated close by the old "Blue Buildings" on the corner of Arsenal Street and Hennessy Road.



THE ORIGINAL ROYAL NAVAL CANTEEN

But by 1920 the future of the Canteen was in question. The Commander-in-Chief,

China Station, reported that the Hong Kong

Government was considering a reclamation scheme to widen and straighten Queen's Road, which would mean the demolition of the Canteen.

Perhaps this was timely. The old Canteen was in such a bad state of repair generally, no modern sanitation even, that plans were afoot to spend something in the region of \$10,000 on redecoration and repair.

The premises had been purchased at an original cost of \$40,000 and their value in 1920 was between \$120,000 and \$150,000.

There were delays over the next three or four years while the possibility of a Union Jack Club for both the Army and Navy was considered. But in 1924 the decision was made to abandon this idea and to concentrate on a Club for naval personnel, leaving the Army to go its own way.

A possible site had been selected for a new Canteen on reclaimed land on Arsenal Street and Queen's Road. It was estimated then that \$1,400,000 would be needed for this project and that could be met as follows:

- *From the old Canteen \$500,000*
- *Compensation from the HK Government for the old site \$400,000*
- *and the balance of \$500,000 made good by an Admiralty grant.*

Further delays were caused when the Admiralty objected to the site - it was too near the Naval Arsenal! During the next few years the Naval Dockyard expanded considerably and a good deal of land changed hands between the Admiralty and the Hong Kong Government, the net result being that the Naval Arsenal was transferred to Stonecutters Island.

IN 1929 NOTICE was formally received from the Government that the Royal Naval Canteen would have to be evacuated, the Government offered compensation for the old site and made an offer of a site on Gloucester Road where a new Canteen could be built.

One might have said the Club was home and dry at last - not quite! Money, or the lack of it, raised its ugly head. The compensation the Hong Kong Government offered was nowhere near sufficient to meet the cost of a new building, which at that time was in the region of \$735,000. All that could be raised was:

- *From the old Canteen \$166,000*
- *From the Weihaiwei Canteen \$ 30,000*
- *Government compensation \$154,000*
- *A balance of \$385,000 had to be found!*

Admiralty turned down a request for an interest-free loan of £20,000 but after considerable discussion with the Treasury a "gift" of £5,000 was eventually approved in July 1931.

After many meetings and discussions to find ways and means to raise the necessary

capital for the new Canteen, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank came to the rescue. The late Sir Vandeleur M. Grayburn, then Chief Manager of the Bank, agreed to an overdraft to cover the cost of erecting and furnishing a new building to take the place of the old Canteen. "Blue Buildings", a name given when the old building became the Canteen, because of the colour of the exterior, is still commonly used by members of the club.

With this assurance from the Bank, plans went ahead for the new building. Messrs. Leigh & Orange were appointed Architects and Mr A.S. Mackichan started preparing plans for consideration by the naval authorities. Plans were submitted for a six-storey building, plus basement. Provisions were made for Bars, Billiards Rooms, Reading Rooms, Dining Rooms, Cubicles, Dormitories, Offices, Staff Quarters, Kitchen, Laundry, Boiler House, a Mineral Water Factory and a Theatre.

The plans were provisionally passed and tenders called for. But great consternation was caused when the receipt of the tenders showed the costs far exceeded the original estimates. A signal received from the Commander-in-Chief read "The Trustees of the Club are placed in a most difficult position, from which they must extricate themselves". The Commander-in-Chief was unable to sanction such a large outlay over and above the original estimated costs.

After more conferences were held by the Naval authorities, Architects and Contractors, a revised plan was produced. This reduced the size of the building by one storey and other savings were made by the use of cement "other than Green Island Cement" and also by the use of less expensive materials for internal construction, and smaller lifts.

The revised plans, with their great reduction in overall costs, were eventually approved and work finally began. The list of contractors sounds a bit like a slice of Hong Kong's history:- Messrs. Lam Woo & Company, Dodwell & Company, Jardine Matheson & Co., Messrs. W. Jack & Co, Hong Kong Electric and the HK & China Gas Company.

Further appeals were made to the Admiralty for financial assistance, and an Admiralty Fleet Order was issued to all units of the Royal Navy asking for contributions. The response was generous. In addition to the

donations from the Fleet, the Admiralty donated £7,000 from a surplus from the old Naval Savings Bank. And the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank handed back, as a gift, the Interest which had been charged on the bank overdraft over approximately three years.

THE CHINA FLEET CLUB

(1934 - 1939)

HK Harbour, HMS Tamar and RN Dockyard

IT HAD ALREADY been established during all those meetings in the 1920s regarding the status of the Canteen, that it belonged to the Men of the Fleet.

On 11th January 1933, the foundation stone of the China Fleet Club, as it had been renamed, was laid by Admiral Sir Howard Kelly, G.B.E., K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., and then Commander-in-Chief, China Station.

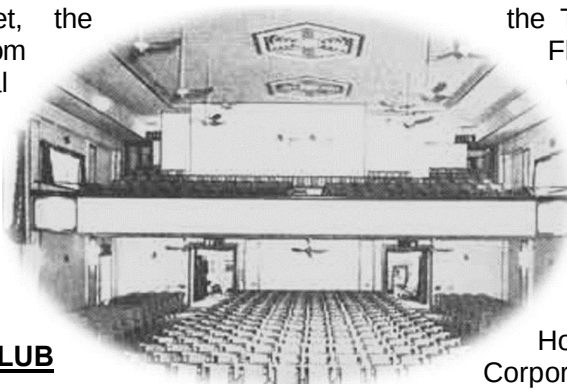
The China Fleet Club stands on Government land. Then, as today, it embraces an area of 19,757 square feet. It is leased to the Trustees of the Club for 999 years; the lease was antedated to 25th June 1863, and executed on 20th June 1934. The Crown Rent for the property was, and is, \$408 a year.

When the Theatre was completed and opened on 27th December 1933, it was immediately booked by the Hong Kong Amateur Dramatic Club for rehearsals and production of plays.

Tombola was a great favourite too and was played in the Theatre three evenings a week. The Club took a 10% share of the takings. Tombola has never lost its popularity and is still played in the Club regularly.

On 21st March 1934 the China Fleet Club was formally opened by Commodore Frank Elliot, R.N., Commodore Hong Kong

During 1934 the China Fleet Club was legally established as a Corporation and on the 18th May, the Governor signed an Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance for the Incorporation of



China Fleet Club Theatre

the Trustees of the China Fleet Club." This Ordinance made the Trustees of the Club, as appointed by the Commodore, or Officer-in-Charge of R.N. Naval Establishments in Hong Kong, a Corporation with the power to hold and deal with its property. The advantages of

having the Club incorporated are that in the event of either of the Trustees leaving Hong Kong new Trustees can be appointed by the Commodore-in-Charge to ensure continued operation of the club.

The China Fleet Club was completed and finished at a total cost of \$1,250,000.00.

By the end of the first year of operation the Club showed a profit of \$35,000. However, prices of Beer, Wines and Spirits were rather high compared to other Clubs in Hong Kong and the Club was not patronized as well as it could have been. So in 1935, the number of Boys employed was cut by 25 per cent, and the cost of meals, wines, beer and spirits reduced by 10 per cent. The Men's Bar was enlarged, taking in a Reading Room. These moves were very satisfying, and the Club became very popular throughout the fleet.

From then on the men used the Club a great deal more and on return from the North, billiard and snooker competitions were organised. Silver cups were presented by Messrs. H. Ruttonjee & Son and members of the winning teams were presented with replicas of the cups.

Medals purchased from Club funds were presented to the runners-up. These competitions were held annually until 1940.

During the 1930s the Theatre was engaged for long periods by the H.K. Amateur Dramatic Club,

the Philharmonic Society and the H.K. Singers. It was also extensively used for Ship's Concerts, Military Concerts, dances organised by the Fleet and also by the



Senior Sailors Bar China Fleet Club

Cheerio Club of Hong Kong. Boxing contests were also held in the winter.

Although prices had been reduced and the Fleet spent less time in Hong Kong - Singapore being an established naval base - considerable profits continued to be made. By 1938 the overdraft at the Bank had been reduced to approximately \$75,000 and all debts in connection with the construction and furnishing of the Club had been paid. The improved financial situation gave considerable satisfaction besides dispelling any doubts as to the Club's ability to pay its way in the future. Letters of congratulation were received from the Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief, China Station.

It is interesting to know what the China Fleet was like in those days. The Fleet, at that time, consisted of the 8th Cruiser Squadron, comprising five or six ships of the "County" or "London" Class cruisers; the 8th Destroyer Flotilla comprising the old "D" Class destroyers; the aircraft carrier, H.M.S. Eagle, H.M.S. Medway, submarine Depot Ship and Submarines; a M.T.B. Flotilla; a score or so of gunboats and a few sloops. The Shore Establishments didn't exist then, and the Ship's Company of TAMAR was accommodated in the old "Amar" The veteran with her white sides and tall yellow masts lent a lot of atmosphere to the Dockyard, but was doomed to be scuttled in the harbour during the war - a sad loss. A small naval air station was already in operation before the War, at Kai Tak.

Towards the end of the 1930's it became obvious that the Club was not large enough to cope with the needs of such a fleet. The Architects were asked to prepare plans for the addition of a new wing to the Club and for an additional floor on top of the existing building. The Hong Kong Government was approached and it was tentatively agreed that the plot of land adjacent to the Theatre should be purchased by the Club and a seven storey building erected there. The Chief Manager of the Hong Kong Bank was approached, and without hesitation, agreed to guarantee an overdraft of \$1,000,000.

The idea was to allocate the new wing of the building for the use of Chief and Petty Officers, and others of similar rank. The existing building was to be for the exclusive use of junior ratings, and the existing kitchen was to be completely modernised.

Then came 1939 and rumours of war. All plans for the modernisation and extension of the Club were suspended on 3rd September 1939, when Europe was plunged into World War II.

Next issue- China Fleet Club - The War Years



What type of parrot is this or is it a parrot?

A Little Bit of History –RFA Bedenham Disaster

Submitted by Ken Jones HMS Tenby Association (Ulster 1961-62)

Editor's Note: This story has a unique twist at the end!

On the 27th of April 1951, in Gibraltar, I witnessed an event which gave me a healthy respect for explosives during my subsequent 23 years as a gunnery rate. The circumstances were as follows:

The munitions carrier RFA Bedenham was unloading a cargo of 500 tons of mixed ammunition at Gun wharf on the morning of the 27th when a depth-charge ignited in a barge which was alongside. A fire brigade sub officer arrived alongside with a fire tender, boarded Bedenham on his own with a fire appliance and directed a jet onto the burning ammunition in the lighter. An R.N. Captain and the Chief Fire Officer organised the firefighting arrangements on the jetty. There followed an explosion and the fire spread to the ship. There then followed a much more violent explosion which ripped the ship apart.

The crew of Bedenham had left the scene but the RN Captain and the Naval Armament Supply Officer who had by then moved onto the ship's bridge, were blown into the water and picked up unharmed by a Naval launch. but eleven people, most of them Firemen, were killed in the vicinity including the Chief and Sub Officer and persons manning fire appliances on the jetty. Two other civilians were killed some distance away at the top of Ragged Staff Hill by flying shrapnel.. Apart from the fact that

almost every pane of glass in the town was blown out there was remarkably little damage due to the fact that the dockyard area is mostly low lying reclaimed land and that it is flanked all the way along its inboard length with continuous 60 ft casements and bastions and this

had the effect of deflecting the full force of the blast upwards. As

you can see from

the

accompanying

photo the bow

section of the

ship was lifted

up onto the jetty,

the two nearest

dockyard cranes

were felled and

extensive damage was done to

buildings in the vicinity. a section of the

foremast/derrick assembly went skywards

and cleared the Rocks 'saddle' at about

1200 ft, landing on the eastern water

catchments above Catalan Bay.

At the time of the event I was a service brat of 9, and lived in a house about half a mile south of the Gun Wharf just above the casement wall at the foot of Scud (not that scud) Hill, and on that morning I was off sick from school and on the second story balcony which gave me a line of sight over the roofs of the dockyard stores buildings looking almost due north.

From this point I could see a rising pall of smoke tinged at the

base with flame, then

a bang. I called

my mother and,

as we watched,

a sheet of flame

reared high

above the

rooftops, then the

whole thing went up,

followed by black dots filling the sky,

at this my Mother, who realised what the

black dots were, heaved me into the house,

down the stairs and into the stair cupboard.



Bedenham explosion April 27th 1951



When we emerged, the only damage to our house was a large chunk of ship's side in our walled yard, but the houses in the alley immediately behind us had the windows and shutters blown out and ceilings down, blast does funny things like that. One of the things that stick in my mind was that, for the next few days there were plugged, contact sea mines floating in the harbour, the reason being that the available Bomb Disposal people were working flat out checking out every one of the thousands of bits of metal scattered around public areas to work out whether they were in fact bits of ammo and dangerous and that it was assumed that if a sea mine, having been blown out of the vessel without exploding, and now peacefully floating about, was o.k. until they could get around to it though there were Naval launches keeping an eye on them.

The accompanying picture shows the bow section on the end of the jetty, the after section resting on the bottom and the two surviving dockyard cranes as well as the ruined buildings.

Now for the rest of the story.....!

At the time Ken was living at No 1 Scud Hill, (1951-53 his dad was CSM of RASC) which is about midway between main dockyard gate and South gate. In 1974, 21 years later I was allocated a Married Quarter designated No. 2 Sandpits MSQ which is one and the same building! How's that for a small world.



No 1 Scud Hill 1951

A standard naval tot of rum consisted of an eighth of a pint of rum (which was over 50% ABV, and was traditionally named "overproof"). Generally spirits are about 40% in comparison.

Labelling spirits today as overproof or underproof is derived from the early method of treating Jamaica rum in the naval victualling yards before it was issued to the warships. The rum used to arrive in England at **140 degrees** overproof after which it was reduced to 95.5 degrees underproof by having water added to it. A small amount of the mixture was poured over some grains of gunpowder and then a magnifying glass was used to ignite it. If the burning alcohol managed to stay alight then it was said to be "proof". And if it didn't light then it was underproof. If it exploded then it was overproof. Proof spirit today is legally defined as that which has a specific gravity of 12/13 (92.3 percent) at 51 ° F and of course they don't do the gunpowder/magnifying glass test anymore!

Once a rating reached the age of twenty he was entitled to draw his tot. Senior Rates were entitled to drink this neat; however Junior Rates had "2 in 1" which meant that it was mixed with two parts water to one part rum. The reason for this was so that the rum could not be stored and saved for another day. The rum was a blend from different countries in the Caribbean, most notably British Guyana, British Virgin Islands and Trinidad

The official reason for stopping the tradition of supplying a tot to ratings was that the Royal Navy had much sophisticated equipment and weaponry onboard and needed sober sailors to operate it.

It was deemed that the Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers would be allowed their own bars to purchase any spirits or beer. The Junior Rates would be entitled to purchase an extra can of beer, making three cans of beer a day. In compensation the Sailors Fund would be created with a lump sum that would be invested and used to purchase recreational equipment for ships companies.

During my prostate exam, I asked my doctor where I should put my pants. "Over there by mine" was **not the answer I expected.**

Admiral Sir Percy Scott, RN

Admiral Sir Percy Scott was born in 1853, and died in 1924. A remarkable man, from the 1890's until World War I, he had been the Royal Navy's top gunnery expert. His part in the Boer War has already been described. This is an outline of his career before and after that war.

He qualified on the long gunnery course at HMS *Excellent* where he later served as an instructor. During his tour there as Commander in 1890, the establishment was moved ashore to Whale Island, in Portsmouth harbour, where it is to this day. Scott could analyse problems and devise practical solutions. He had a clear mind, and had a list of inventions to his credit. He saw that much could be done to improve the navy's gunnery.

His first command, in 1898, was HMS *Scylla*. She soon became the most efficient gunnery ship in the fleet. Where the normal percentage of hits to rounds fired was 30 per cent, *Scylla* achieved an amazing 80 per cent.

Scott's next command was HMS *Terrible*. After South Africa, *Terrible* joined the China Fleet. Soon she had broken all records with her 6 in and 4,7 in guns. Scott's enthusiasm infected the whole fleet. The fact that *Terrible* later dropped to fourth position with her 6 in guns illustrates the remarkable improvement in the other ships.

There was now intense competition in gunnery in the whole of the Royal Navy. This competition extended beyond the men directly involved and their ships - to the whole nation. Results were published in the newspapers - and promotions were affected by these results.



In spite of these successes, Scott's career was a stormy one. Short in stature, his manner was abrasive and thrusting. He made enemies as well as friends. In 1905, he became Inspector of Target Practice and in 1907 assumed command of a cruiser squadron in the Channel Fleet. Throughout this time he continued to work on improving gun control

systems.

But he was a man of vision, too. In a letter to *The Times* in 1913, he wrote: 'Submarines and aeroplanes have entirely revolutionized naval warfare. No fleet can hide itself from the aeroplane's eye and the submarine can deliver a deadly attack even in broad daylight.' His views were treated with scorn.

World War I was soon to break out and in spite of Scott's efforts the Royal Navy had fallen behind the Germans. Scott had brought out his director system in 1911 by which all guns were trained, laid and fired by a master sight in the ship's foretop, well above the smoke. Gunlayers had merely to follow the electrically repeated bearing and elevation of the master sight. Scott's ideas met with opposition from diehards, and by August 1914, only eight battleships in the Grand Fleet had been fitted for director firing.

The Germans were well abreast with these developments and their corresponding system was fitted throughout the High Seas Fleet. They were also ahead with their stereoscopic rangefinders and their ammunition, torpedoes and mines. Their superiority was demonstrated at Jutland.

In September 1915, Scott was placed in charge of London's anti-aircraft defences - following the shock of Zeppelin raids on the capital and the Press agitation which followed. While realizing the need for more guns, he also asked for aeroplanes - appreciating that they were needed to fight other aeroplanes, or Zeppelins.

In Scott's opinion, World War I had proved the uselessness of surface battleships. In 1920 he renewed his campaign to make the British public aware of this fact. 'We are on the eve of declaring a new naval programme. Let us not forget that the submarine and the aeroplane have revolutionized naval warfare; that the battleships on the ocean are in great danger; that when not on the ocean they must be in hermetically sealed harbours; that you cannot hide from the eye of an aeroplane.'

In his autobiography he wrote: 'The future is with the aeroplane which is going to develop rapidly in the next few years. Probably we shall also have submersible battleships of 10,000 tons. What chance will the surface battleship, presenting a huge target, have against such a vessel?'

Percy Scott died in 1924, but, less than twenty years later, his prophesies were proved to be correct. A German U-boat sank the *Royal Oak* in Scapa Flow; British midget submarines damaged the *Tirpitz* in a Norwegian fjord; Fleet Air Arm aircraft crippled the Italian fleet in Taranto; and the Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbour was devastating. And now there are no longer any battleships in commission anywhere in the world, whereas submarines with nuclear missiles have more firepower than all the navies of the past combined.

A cowboy named Bud was overseeing his herd in a remote

mountainous pasture in Alberta when suddenly a brand-new BMW advanced toward him out of a cloud of dust.

The driver, a young man in a Brioni® suit, Gucci® shoes, RayBan® sunglasses and YSL® tie, leaned out the window and asked the cowboy, "If I tell you exactly how many cows and calves you have in your herd, will you give me a calf?"

Bud looks at the man, who obviously is a yuppie, then looks at his peacefully grazing herd and calmly answers, "Sure, why not?"

The yuppie parks his car, whips out his Dell® notebook computer, connects it to his Cingular RAZR V3® cell phone, and surfs to a NASA page on the Internet, where he calls up a GPS satellite to get an exact fix on his location which he then feeds to another NASA satellite that scans the area in an ultra-high-resolution photo.

The young man then opens the digital photo in Adobe Photoshop® and exports it to an image processing facility in Hamburg, Germany.

Within seconds, he receives an email on his Palm Pilot® that the image has been processed and the data stored. He then accesses an MS-SQL® database through an ODBC connected Excel® spreadsheet with email on his Blackberry® and, after a few minutes, receives a response.

Finally, he prints out a full-color, 150-page report on his hi-tech, miniaturized HP LaserJet® printer, turns to the cowboy and says, "You

have exactly 1,586 cows and calves."

"That's right. Well, I guess you can take one of my calves," says Bud.

He watches the young man select one of the animals and looks on with amusement as the young man stuffs it into the trunk of his car.

Then Bud says to the young man, "Hey, if I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my calf?"

The young man thinks about it for a second and then says, "Okay, why not?"

"You're a Member of Parliament for the British Government", says Bud.

"Wow! That's correct," says the yuppie, "but how did you guess that?"

"No guessing required." answered the cowboy.

"You showed up here even though nobody called you; you want to get paid for an answer I already knew, to a question I never asked. You

used millions of dollars' worth of equipment trying to show me how much smarter than me you are; and you don't know a thing about how working people make a living - or about cows, for that matter. This is a herd of sheep.

Now give me back my dog.

In a train from London to Manchester an American was berating the Englishman sitting across from him in the compartment.

"The trouble with you English is that you are too stuffy. You set yourselves apart too much.

You think your stiff upper lip makes you above the rest of us.

Look at me... I have Italian blood, Greek blood, a little Irish blood and some Spanish blood.

What do you say to that?"

The Englishman lowered his newspaper and replied,

"How very sporting of your mother!"



Out and about

By Norrie Millen

Reunion bookings are slowly coming in for Weston Super Mare and reports from shipmates who have previously stayed there are excellent. Shipmate Fred Bright who only lives 20 odd miles away was kind enough to carry 'User Checks' and reported that *HATS* were successfully carried out. Only bad news was that parking is limited at the hotel, but there is plenty of free parking nearby. Not too far from rail and bus stations too. I have pencilled in a bus trip to Cheddar Gorge and this is also proving popular.

I know that you all receive the newsletter, but I get little acknowledgement that you have received, enjoyed, disliked, have a suggestion, an anecdote to share and the list goes on. So shipmates sharpen up your trusty quills and let me know how you feel and I am sure you have many an amusing tale to relate which you could share with your shipmates.

"That's all for now folks"