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# QUARTERDECK

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The Friends of HMS Trincomalee

Autumn 2021



*Photo - Martin Barker*

**Women and Children on Board - Never!**

**Extracts from the Diary of Martha Ella**

**On Board the Foudroyant in the 1920s**

**Chairman's Report 2021**

**Annual General Meeting reminder**

**Mess Deck Crossword**



*Photo - Martin Barker*

*A reminder is given of our:*

**Annual General Meeting 2021  
Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm  
Via the internet “zoom” facility**

**AGENDA:**

1. Welcome and apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019
3. Chairman's report
4. Treasurer's report and accounts ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021
5. Appointment of Trustees
6. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
7. Any other business (Notified to the Secretary prior to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021)

The closing date for all nominations to be received by the Secretary was Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021, as announced in the Summer Quarterdeck magazine.

Those members wishing to attend the “zoom” meeting on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 need to provide a contact email address for their invitation to the “zoom” meeting to be sent, this email address should be notified to [events@friendsofhmstrincomalee.org.uk](mailto:events@friendsofhmstrincomalee.org.uk) .

**Ruth Turner, Hon. Secretary**

## EDITORIAL

As winter approaches, with persisting uncertainty over how the pandemic may affect us, the Friends are holding their Annual General Meeting via the internet. The Chairman's report is included in this issue.

There are three articles which all relate to diaries, or recollections of people associated with our ship, both as HMS Trincomalee and TS Foudroyant. I thank Mary Monnery, a Friend of HMS Trincomalee, for sending to me the article "Women and children on board – never!" which relates to the period around 1819. Looking through the "archives" I found a comprehensive transcript of Martha Ella's diary, she was a young member of the pioneer community when our ship was based at Fort Victoria, British Columbia, in the 1850s.

Finally we look at the 1920s thanks to a letter which Noel Tyrrell sent to the editor of the Quarterdeck in 1996.

Seasonal greetings to all readers, with the hope of a better New Year.

Hugh Turner

*Any correspondence concerning the Friends Association should be sent to:*

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## Chairman's Report 2021

It was on 25th September 2019 that the Friends of HMS Trincomalee held their last Annual General Meeting. We met at the Historic Quay in Hartlepool, and after the formal proceedings, Ros Adamson, the General Manager of the National Museum of the Royal Navy – Hartlepool, gave a presentation. She provided us with an insight of their proposals for reconfiguring the layout of the rooms around the quay and increasing the attractions both for visitors to Hartlepool and for the local residents.

The mood at this meeting just over two years ago was optimistic. At that time Friends were able to turn up at the Quay, unannounced, with their membership cards and gain access to the Quay and our ship. An agenda of social meetings for 2020 was drawn up, and just prior to our National lock-down due to the pandemic a hard copy of the Quarterdeck was posted out to all our members.

The pandemic has had serious effects around the globe. Let us focus on how it has affected our charity.

During the early stages of the first lock-down in Spring 2020 the committee decided to suspend the production of hard copies of the Quarterdeck, and with the closure of the Historic Quay to visitors the “membership package” was much reduced. Taking this into account, the committee decided that any member as on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 would remain a member until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 whether or not they renewed their subscription in the intervening period. The Quarterdeck would be sent out in digital form to any member who provided an email address for this to occur. These decisions were notified to the membership by email and post.

The Charity Commission require a minimum of two committee meetings of the trustees per year, and our constitution and rules allow us to do this using the internet and telephone.

Our Annual General Meeting originally planned for September 2020 was cancelled. Once again this was not in contravention of the Charity Commission rules, since our constitution does not give a specific time for our Annual Meeting. Other charitable organisations cancelled their AGMs for 2020, one of which I know being the London Zoological Society (of which I have been a Fellow of for over 40 years).

Throughout the pandemic our finances have remained in good health.

Although the Historic Quay was closed to visitors, some staff were retained in work there by the National Museum of the Royal Navy for security and



maintenance purposes, others were placed on furlough. The Friends were still able to actively support the Quay and ship. The Victorian figurehead was restored in London for which the Friends provided over 50% of the funding, the Art Fund was also a major source of money for this. The Friends fully funded a paint analysis of the ship, as reported in the last Summer Quarterdeck, and we also paid for a new set of signal flags, a dehumidifier and an ultra violet light.

On October 7<sup>th</sup> 2021 our funds stood at £15,234. Membership has fallen over the last two years. Two weeks into the first lock-down, it was learning of the death of one of our members due to Covid-19 on his return from a holiday in Spain that heightened my awareness of the seriousness of the disease. He had often attended social meetings at the Quay.

Our membership secretary, Martin Barker, reported in October that we then had:

“98 memberships active, prior to Covid (in December 2019) this had been 116. During that period 6 members died but 2 spouses decided to continue membership.

The majority of the reduction is due to no response to reminder letters, with a few standing orders being cancelled and one letter of resignation.

One new member joined this year and one last year.”

As 2021 draws to a close the Historic Quay is open to visitors and Friends may use their membership cards to gain free entry, providing that the number of people in the Quay conform with the National Museum of the Royal Navy – Hartlepool's requirements due to managing the Covid-19 risk. With the possibility of further changes in the rules and guidelines concerning our management of this risk, if you intend to visit the Quay I recommend that you check via the National Museum of the Royal Navy's website, of the current state of things.

Members as at 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 have now received hard copies of all the three Quarterdecks originally sent out in digital form only.

Although the internet has been useful for the distribution of the Quarterdeck, and for committee meetings, it has not proved itself as a forum for social meetings of the Friends. Hopefully when the Spring 2022 Quarterdeck is issued there will be a few face-to-face social meetings in our events listing.

The date for nomination of members to become trustees at our 2021 AGM has passed. No new members have come forward. Three of our present trustees are required to stand for re-election at our 2021 AGM, this being the third AGM since their last election. John Davies, who has been a regular active attendee

at Committee meetings, particularly helping to find speakers for meetings and indeed he has been a stalwart of the Friends, has decided that the time has come for him to stand down as a trustee. The other two trustees, who are standing for re-election, are myself (Chairman) and my wife, Ruth (Secretary).

Since the number of members standing for election is less than the number of available posts the election is uncontested.

After the 2021 AGM, being formally held on 8<sup>th</sup> December via the internet, the number of trustees for our charity will be five. Our constitution and rules allow for there to be nine trustees. It is to be hoped that some “fresh blood” may join us on the committee, this could initially be by co-option prior to a formal election at an AGM.

To help with administration, the contact address for all matters relating to the Friends is to be Pinewood Lodge and not the Quay, this includes membership queries. The full contact address is to be found in the contact insert in the magazine.

Throughout the pandemic the number of visitors to our website has been increasing and now stands at just under 21,000 visitors in the last 12 months.

In spite of the pandemic our charity has continued to fulfil its mission to “Preserve and Promote” our ship, HMS Trincomalee, and I look forward to see how we continue to do this in the New Year.

## Mess Deck Crossword

Cryptic - Summer 2021

Solution:



## Women and children on board – never!

Way back in the early 1970's my mother inherited a journal written by Eliza Bunt. After looking at it she thought that the first part of the diary was probably written while Eliza was travelling to England on board HMS Trincomalee. In the 1970's the ship was known as the Foudroyant, so my mother wrote to the Captain of TS Foudroyant telling him about the diary. She received the following reply to her letter which obviously aroused little interest as the idea of a lady with two small children travelling on board a Royal Naval vessel was just unthinkable to him:

'FRIGATE FOUDROYANT  
c/o G.P.O. GOSPORT  
HAMPSHIRE

15<sup>th</sup> December, 1978

Dear Mrs. Barr,

Thank you very much indeed for the copy of your great great grandmother's diary which you have clearly been to a lot of trouble to reproduce.

I have not yet had time to read it, but scanning through the first page I suspect that the "Trincomalee" in which she came home is a different ship to the one now called "Foudroyant".

I think it unlikely that passengers, including children, would have taken passage in a warship and the dates of arrival in England do not coincide. Your "Trincomalee" arrived on the 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1818 and this ship arrived in Portsmouth on the 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1819. It is an extraordinary coincidence that two ships of the same name could have made the passage from India at roughly the same time.

You and your husband will be interested to hear that the ship is due to dock in No. 4. Dock at Southampton on the 4<sup>th</sup> January, and I hope that you will come on board when we can meet and I can show you round.

The compliments of the season to you both.

Yours sincerely,

R.W. Paige  
Captain Superintendent'

My mother was so disappointed by his total dismissal of the notion that widowed Eliza, and her two children might have been on board, and his not reading of her letter sufficiently to understand what she had actually said, that she put the diary in a cupboard and never looked at it again, until I came across it after my father's death in 1981 and asked her what it was and who wrote it.

I resolved to try and find out more about Eliza and how she came to be travelling on a Royal Navy vessel. Hours of general research, and visits to the National Archives at Kew, eventually proved that Eliza and her two children were indeed on board HMS Trincomalee and revealed the reason why Eliza was on board. Eliza and her two children were clearly recorded on the muster rolls, as they were being returned officially by the navy from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to England after the death of Eliza's husband, John Bunt, late boatswain of the dockyard at Trincomalee. As such they were entitled to receive a daily food ration and their names needed to be listed on the muster rolls. The captain's log also records their arrival on board.

What of course would be much more difficult to prove without Eliza's journal are the existence of several other passengers (men, women and children) on board during the voyage, since they were not there at the navy's expense and therefore do not appear on any official records. These include:

Betsy (baptised Elizabeth) Rogers aged about 15 years who helped Eliza with the children and shared her cabin. Betsy's father, who also worked at the dockyard, and his wife, Rachael, were to return from Ceylon to his home town about a year later and were re-united with their daughter.

The captain's fiancée, Harriet Louisa Young (accompanied by her father, Colonel Young) joined the ship at Port Louis and was married to Captain Philip Henry Bridges at the Cape of Good Hope on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1819, she travelled to England with her new husband.

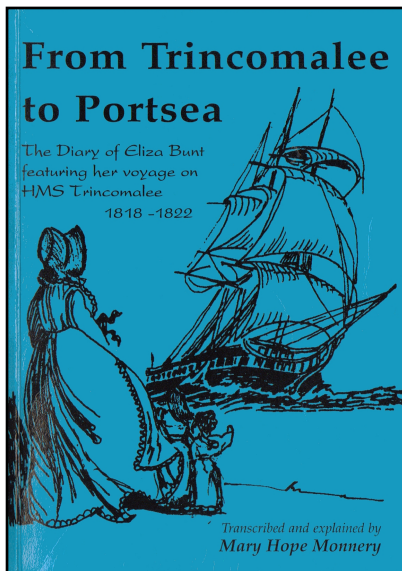
The ship which was yet to be fitted out, was also carrying a number of sick and injured service men who needed to return to Britain, in addition to a number of gentleman passengers.

Several lady passengers (at least one with children) joined the ship at various ports of call and are referred to in the diary. It is difficult to research them further due to lack of information, as again full names were not recorded on any official naval record and therefore officially they did not exist!

Finally, there were what Eliza called the "ladies of the ship" who presumably lived below decks with the seamen, but of course they do not appear listed in any naval records. Eliza pays them for doing her washing, etc.

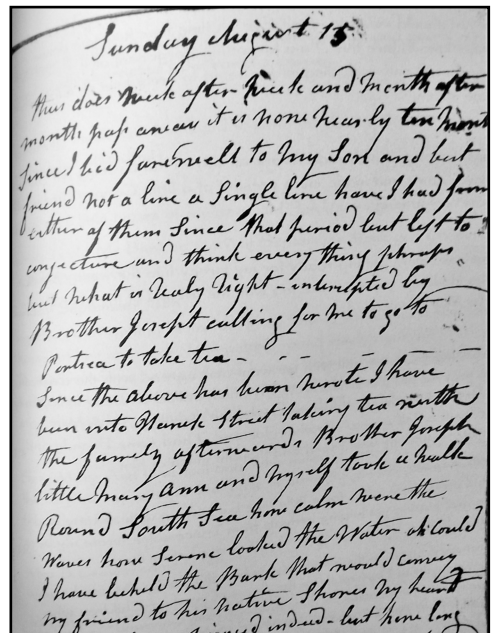
Nowadays I think that it is known that during peace time naval ships of this period may have offered transport to non-naval personnel, 'hitching a lift' so to speak, but what I can't find out, and would be very grateful if anyone can tell me, is if this was a private arrangement between the captain and would be traveller, to which the naval authorities turned a blind eye. Was this practice commonplace at that time, and would payment for passage be involved? If so, who kept the money?

Mary Monnery

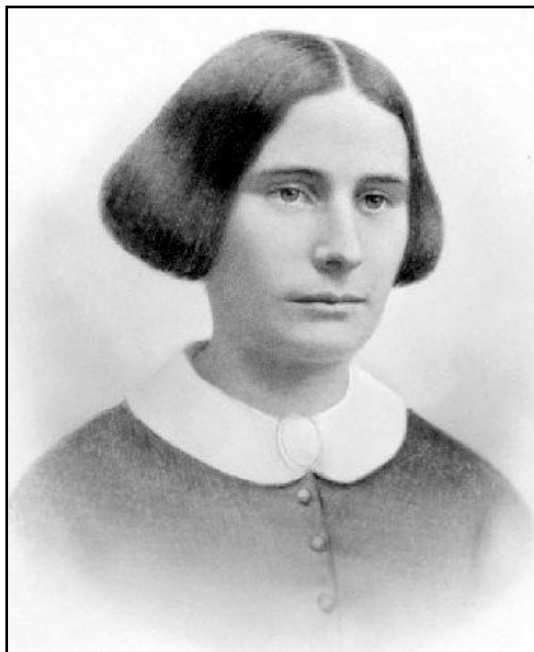


Mary Monnery's book about Eliza Bunt which includes a transcription of her diary is available as an ebook. Further details are on our website

[FriendsOfHMSTrincomalee.org.uk](http://FriendsOfHMSTrincomalee.org.uk)



## Extracts from the diary of Martha Ella



*Mrs Martha Ella*

The following are extracts from the diary of Martha Ella for the period 1853 to 1856, the extracts being associated with HMS Trincomalee whilst she was stationed at Fort Victoria, British Columbia.

**18 Oct 53:** There was a theatre aboard the man of war Trincomalee. Captain and Mrs. Cooper and myself were invited to see the scene and of course went. Mr. and Mrs. Langford and family, the Governor and his family, Mr. and Mrs. Skinner and the gentlemen from the Fort went on board about 6.00 o'clock in the evening.

**22 Oct 53:** Mr. Langford came over on horseback with two officers from the Trincomalee. Mr. Hall and Sir Lorraine a midshipman, went away in the evening.

**19 Jul 55:** The British man of war Brisk came into harbour the same day. Mr. Tighe, one of the midshipmen called here to report to the Governor.

**Aug 55:** Mr. Ella, Tom Cooper and myself went up to the Fort to a party given by the Governor and the officers of the Brisk and the Dido. We stayed at the Fort that night and came home on horse the next day very tired, and next day my husband went again to join the Otter at Victoria. Came back, did not go in her.

**17 Aug 56:** Mr. Cridge read prayers in the morning. Monday they returned to the Fort. I went with them and stayed until Friday. Two men of war came in last week, the line of battleship Monarch and the Trincomalee.



*Rev'd Edward Cridge*

**6 Sep 56:** I went to Mrs. Skinner's to go on board the Monarch to hear the service tomorrow.

**7 Sep 56:** Mr. Alexander, the flag lieutenant, and Mrs. Alexander his wife, the daughter of Admiral Bruce came down to spend the night with us.

**13 Sep 56:** Sunday, went on board the Monarch to hear the service. Capt. Cooper had his child christened by the chaplain named Jane Bruce, Mrs. Alexander, Godmama, and Mrs. Langford.



**16 Sep 56:** Went to the Governor's Ball at the Fort. Very pleasant party. Kept up until 4 o'clock in the morning. We had the Admiral's Band from the ships.

**18 Sep 56:** Went for a row in the Trincomalee's boat with Mrs. Langford and some of the Miss "L's". Had a ... picnic around the Dockyard Island. Three officers with us, Mr. Summerville, Mr. Bray and Mr. Richardson after dinner went on board the Trincomalee for a short time. After that we rode home again.

**19 Sep 56:** I went on board the Monarch to dine with Mrs. Alexander at 5 o'clock in the evening, went to a small dancing party given by Capt. Patey of the Monarch. I returned to the ship with Mrs. Alexander to sleep, went on shore the next morning after breakfast in the Captain's gig.

**23 Sep 56:** The Monarch sailed for San Francisco, ...

**25 Sep 56:** Thursday we had a party. Came down on horseback. Mr. Langford, Mary and Oattie, Mrs. Martin and Sir Lorraine from the Trincomalee. We all returned in the evening.



*Sir Lambton Lorraine*

**27 Sep 56:** Dr. Beaumont returned to the Trincomalee the same day.

**29 Sep 56:** We had a large riding party down here. There was Mr. Langford, and three of his daughters, and Miss Agnes Douglas, and Mr. Skinner. Then there was Dr. Beaumont, Mr. Martin, Mr. Miller, Mr. Summerville, Sir Lorraine, Mr. Price from the Trincomalee, 11 of them altogether. I returned to Colwood with them in the evening.

**30 Sep 56:** Went to a dancing party on board the Trincomalee. Kept up until 4 o'clock in the morning. A wedding took place the day Mr. Newton, one of the Company's clerks, to Miss Tod. They go down to Metchosin to spend the honeymoon. They were the first couple to be married in the Colonial church.

**6 Oct 56:** Mr. and Mrs. Newton and myself rode over to Colwood, dined there and returned in the evening. We had a very pleasant ride. The Trincomalee sailed today for Massetland. We are left without a man of war for a short time.



*Fort Victoria in 1860*

## On board the Foudroyant in the 1920s



*Noel Tyrrell*

Noel Tyrrell was a member of the crew on the Foudroyant in the 1920s, in 1996 he wrote a letter to the Friends of HMS Trincomalee about this experience:

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Gwynedd

12<sup>th</sup> Aug 1996

... My brother and I joined the Foudroyant in January 1924, when I was thirteen and he was fifteen. At that time the Cutty Sark and the Foudroyant were moored close together, both 'swinging', moored at the bow, in Falmouth Harbour.

Mr. George Harman was Captain at that time and I believe that he served on the Foudroyant that was wrecked in 1897. The number of boys on board varied between twenty and twenty-five and they were usually lads that lost either one or both parents.

Our days were spent cleaning ship, learning to box the compass, splice ropes, general seamanship and rowing to shore to collect the post, papers and food etc. We slept in hammocks in the foc'sle and lower deck. The food was plain, but plentiful. Our exercise was obtained by rowing in regattas, playing football on the upper deck, with a ball, made from rolled-up socks (!). We played cricket with the crews from HMS Colne and HMS Ettrick, Fisheries protection vessels.



*Noel is right at the back in this picture*

We were allowed on shore for a few hours on weekends. When we were about fifteen to sixteen, we were allowed on shore every other evening. We had a religious service, on board every Sunday, but if Mr. Cobb was not present we attended the local parish church.

At Christmas we had holidays at home, but some boys stayed on board. Lads who lived near Caldicott, were allowed to spend a week of their holidays, staying with Mr. Cobb and sleeping in the keep of Caldicott Castle. I stayed there several times.

It was decided, about 1929, that the Foudroyant and the Cutty Sark, swinging in the Harbour, provided a hazard to other shipping and so then they were moored fore and aft. During a gale, I think that it was Christmas 1929, they both



*Hauling a working gig on board for maintenance and painting*



*The Foudroyant Football Team*

dragged anchor, and ended on the beach. The Foudroyant was then moored in the Carrick Roads, until she was towed, by the tug Victor, to the River Cleddau in Pembrokeshire.

Mr. Cobb had an arrangement with the New Zealand Shipping Co. and the Federal Steam Navigation Company, that they would take the lads, between seventeen and nineteen, to become seamen. Mr. Cobb died in 1931, and I left the Foudroyant in July 1931, and joined the New Zealand Shipping Co. ...

...I am now eighty four years of age, but the time I spent on the Foudroyant will always have a very special place in my memory. ...

Yours Sincerely,  
N. R. Tyrrell



*The crew of the Foudroyant c1928*



## The Fate HMS Thisbe, a Leda Class ship

In August, Chris Bowers, a Friend of HMS Trincomalee, sent an email to the editor:

“... Looking through some old papers belonging to my Grandmother I came across a special newspaper edition from 1964. The newspaper in question is the South Wales Echo.

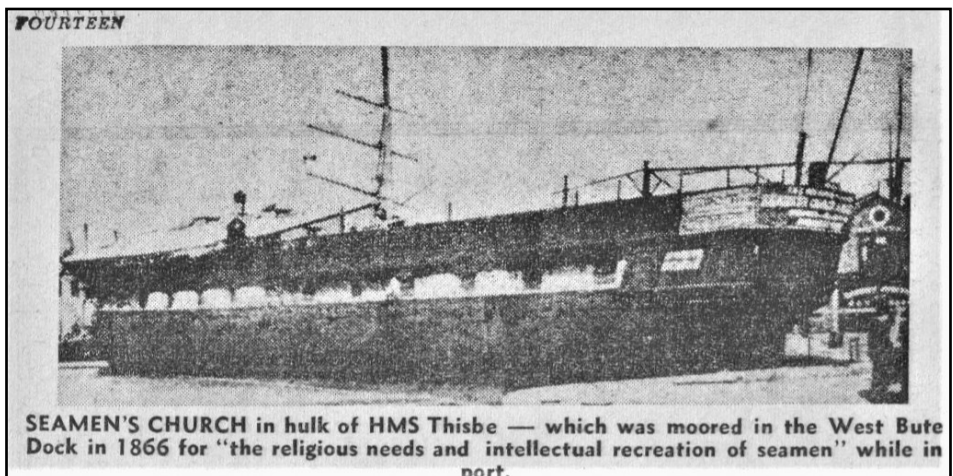
Publication date of the Special was November the 4<sup>th</sup> 1964, priced at fourpence, entitled 'OLD CARDIFF IN PICTURES'

Both my grandparents on my mother's side were from Cardiff.

Anyway on page 14, enclosed, is HMS Thisbe. She was being used as a floating church for sailors.

Thisbe is a LEDA Class as is HMS Trincomalee.

Thisbe was broken up in 1892-93 and the National Museum of Wales holds a photo of her beached and being stripped down ...”

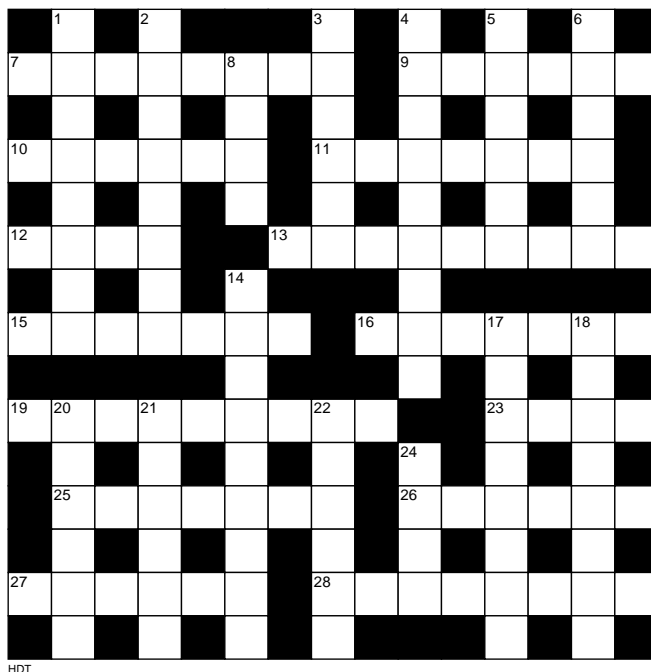


Leda Class vessels were first built in 1805, 47 were completed by 1832. In 1832 the production of a further two Leda Class ships was cancelled. Perhaps we will take a look at the fate of the other ships in this class in a future Quarterdeck.



# Mess Deck Crossword

Autumn 2021



HDT

## ACROSS

- 7 Asiatic evergreen (8)
- 9 Tug that towed the Foudroyant to the river Cleddau (6)
- 10 Vaccinated (6)
- 11 Captain Patey's ship in 1856 (7)
- 12 Martial art (4)
- 13 Deduction (9)
- 15 Barred (4,3)
- 16 Most suitable (7)
- 19 Moored near to the Foudroyant at Falmouth (5,4)
- 23 Neglect (4)
- 25 Such a party was held on HMS Trincomalee in 1856 (7)
- 26 He held religious services in Fort Victoria in the 1850s (6)
- 27 Eliza Bunt was returned to England from here (6)
- 28 Teaches again (8)

## DOWN

- 1 Home of the Foudroyant in 1924 (8)
- 2 Doctor on board HMS Trincomalee in 1856 (8)
- 3 Captain of the Foudroyant in 1924 (6)
- 4 Like an angel (9)
- 5 Increase gradually (6)
- 6 A style of church (6)
- 8 Look (4)
- 14 Doubts (9)
- 17 Very hot (8)
- 18 The Foudroyant was a hazard due to this in Falmouth harbour (8)
- 20 Unmakes (6)
- 21 Twist together (6)
- 22 Esteem (6)
- 24 Scotsman (4)



*The Foudroyant in a dry dock at Falmouth 1928/1929*