



Quarterdeck

The Newsletter of The Friends of HMS Trincomalee

November 1994

PRINCESS ROYAL VISITS HMS TRINCOMALEE

HMS Trincomalee received its second Royal Visit in twelve months on September 16th when Princess Anne toured the ship during her visit to Hartlepool. The Princess Royal had come to observe the final stages of the World Offshore Power Boat Racing Championships, which were being held in Hartlepool Bay during that week, and made time to visit our ship after performing the official opening of the Historic Quay. Like her father, the Duke of Edinburgh, who inspected the ship last year, The Princess Royal showed a keen interest in the process of restoration.

We very much hope that Her Royal Highness will return at regular intervals.

RESTORATION PROGRESS

In the Trust's Project workshops progress has been made with the replacement of existing items which have suffered from the elements and are beyond repair, and the team has also been making up the essential elements for the masts and rigging, none of which of course survives in the original.

The catheads, which feature so prominently in photographs of the ship because of their proximity to the figurehead and the fact that someone has at some stage added a cat's head to the end of each, had suffered badly from rot in their exposed positions. These timbers are of course required to have considerable strength to support the weight of a heavy anchor, and a new cathead, made to the exact pattern

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HISTORIC QUAY OPENS



Hartlepool's new Historic Quay opened its doors to the public for the first time on July 25th 1994.

Constructed round a former graving dock, the Historic Quay aims to reproduce the atmosphere of a North Eastern Quayside of the early 1800s and provides a spectacular insight into the world of the Royal Navy at the time of Trafalgar.

All this of course makes a perfect setting for HMS Trincomalee, which will eventually lie afloat in the dock surrounded by the remarkably authentic quayside buildings which include a Naval Prison, Nautical Instrument Makers, Gunsmiths and Swordsmiths, Naval Architects' and Shipchangers' premises - even an Admiral's Residence.

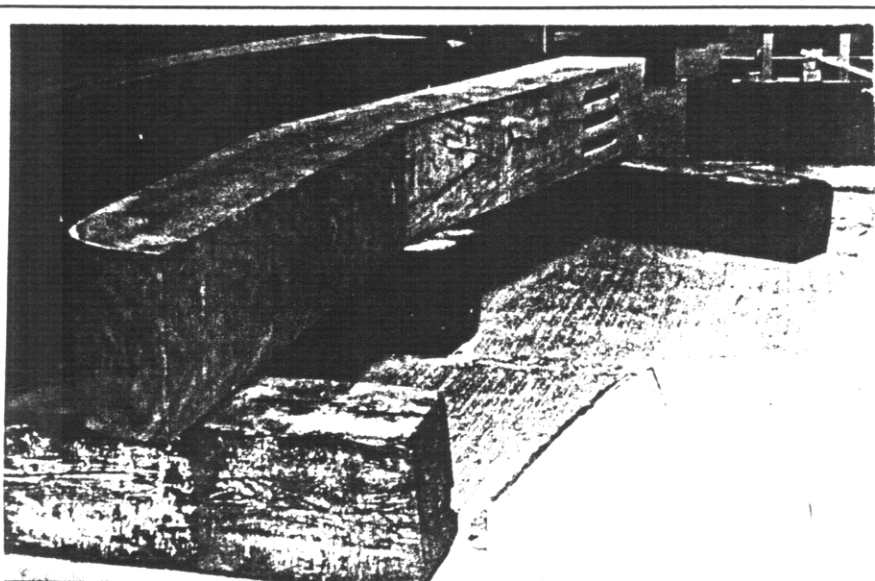
The Trincomalee Trust will be

provided with office accommodation and workshops alongside the quay, and there can be no doubt that once HMS Trincomalee is in situ she will become the centrepiece of the whole complex.

The process of restoration, however, is a painstaking one, and it will be some time before we see her masts and spars rising above the roofs of the quayside buildings.

The dock, which retains almost all the fittings of its original role as a dry-dock, will be used to accommodate HMS Trincomalee in the spring of 1995 when she will be drydocked at the Historic Quay for work on the lower parts of her hull. Once this work is complete she will return to her present berth in Jackson Dock until restoration is complete, when she will be ready to take her place at the Historic Quay.

The enclosed Visitor Guide gives an idea of the attractions offered by the Quay, but only a visit to the Fighting Ships Experience can convey the realistic atmosphere of the inside of a warship of Nelson's navy in action.

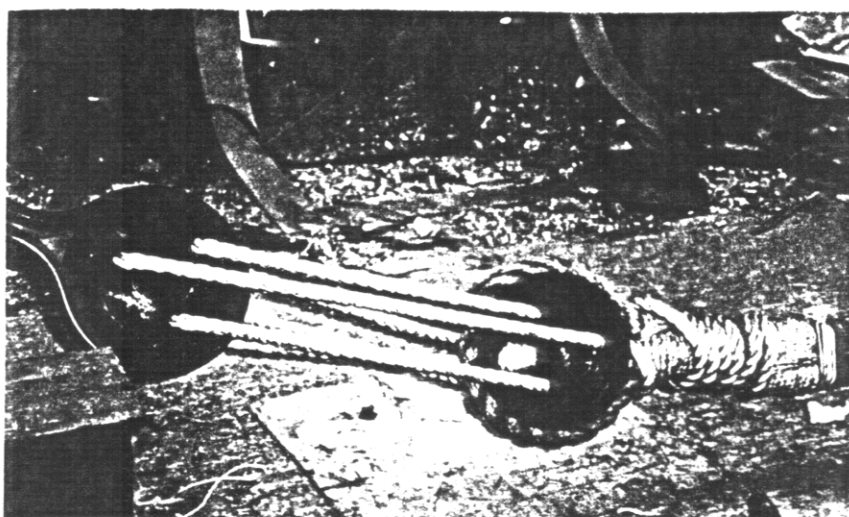


A replacement cathead pictured in the workshop

RESTORATION PROGRESS

(Continued from front page)

of the original, has been created as a replacement. We are reliably informed that the bas-relief cat's head, a favourite item with younger visitors, will be replaced on the new timbers. The mainmast channel has also been constructed during the summer, and the craftsmen of the restoration team have been busy fashioning such essential items as the deadeyes for the lower mainmast shrouds



Newly made deadeyes, test-rigged for the lower mainmast shrouds

THE SIBERT DRILL

In June 1994 it was recognised that a more detailed survey of the ship's internal hull structure was required for material estimation purposes.

The apparent condition of timbers from a surface inspection can be misleading, but at the same time the effect on the material of boring holes, for example, to assess the internal state of the heavier timbers, is undesirable. To overcome this problem the restoration team made use of modern technology in the shape of the Sibert Decay Detection Drill which uses a drill bit so thin that once it is withdrawn no detectable hole remains in the timber.

Once the bit has reached the required depth the density of the surrounding timber can be measured and by comparing the results with those of test drillings into sound and rotten teak respectively a good impression of the soundness of the timbers can be obtained. The equipment produces a continuous reading of density on a paper trace, and can be calibrated according to the type of timber under investigation.

During July 1994 a total of 250 drillings were carried out from the inside of the hull over the accessible lengths of the midships hull timbers using the Sibert equipment. The drill was inserted to depths of between 75 to 100mm and from the results a number of areas of deterioration in the inner lining and frames were detected.

HMS FOUDROYANT - SWORDS INTO PLOUGHSHARES, SHIPS INTO GLOVE-STRETCHERS?

An interesting insight into the fate of HMS FOUDROYANT (Nelson's former 80 gun flagship of 1789) was gained from a small package sent to the Editor by a Mrs Geraldine Barratt of Tynemouth.

The package contained a pair of wooden glove-stretchers (not an item in everyday use in the late 20th Century) bearing a transfer showing HMS FOUDROYANT. Mrs Barratt's father had at one time taught on board FOUDROYANT (as Trincomalee was known at that time) and she assumes that this was when he acquired the glove-stretchers.

The glove stretchers are almost certainly made from the timbers of Nelson's FOUDROYANT which was the first vessel used as a training ship by Mr G. W. Cobb. Bought by him from German shipbreakers in 1892 for £6000, she was restored to seaworthy condition at a cost of £20,000 and visited in turn many of the coastal resorts of Britain with a permanent crew of half a dozen men and a number of young trainees. Whilst off Blackpool in 1897 she got into difficulties in gale force winds and was driven aground. Happily Mr Cobb, his crew and the boy trainees were all saved, but FOUDROYANT was a constructive total loss, and the remains of her timbers were apparently visible off Blackpool at low

water for many years. Thus ended the career of a ship which had served as Lord Nelson's Flagship in the Mediterranean in 1799/1800; upon whose deck Lady Hamilton had pleaded for the life of Prince Caraccioli; whose guns had beaten the French 80-gun GUILLAUME TELL into submission during the 1800 blockade of Malta in less than three hours, and whose cabins had temporarily housed the court of the Kingdom of Naples.

Mrs Barratt's glove-stretchers however are a reminder that the timbers of this gallant ship were to live on in a number of different forms. Apparently from the timbers salvaged after the wreck of FOUDROYANT a wide range of wooden souvenirs were created, and from the copper bolts and other metal parts small commemorative medallions were struck which turn up regularly in antique shops and collectors fairs. These items almost always bear some certification that they came from "Nelson's Flagship" FOUDROYANT, and were evidently produced in a wide variety of forms, from quite sizeable items of furniture ("a Replica of a Chair belonging to Lord Nelson's Father") to egg timers (sold at 1s each), ping-pong rackets (1s 9d the pair) and collar studs at 1d apiece. And, of course, glove-stretchers...

SMALL ARMS OF HMS TRINCOMALEE 2

THE SEA SERVICE MUSKET

At the time HMS Trincomalee was built, the longarms issued to ships of the Royal Navy were flintlock muskets, many of which had been in use since the 1740s. These muskets were smooth-bored weapons with a calibre of nearly three-quarters of an inch, muzzle loading and firing a round lead ball. The earliest examples had barrels of 37 to 38 inches and at first glance resemble the muskets used by infantry regiments which were familiarly known as the "Brown Bess". The Admiralty however used a pattern adapted to their own requirements known as the Sea Service Musket. These differed from the so-called Land Pattern in having a heavier barrel, a stronger and less slender stock and a heavy brass buttplate. These Naval muskets were regularly supplied, at the Admiralty's request, with the iron barrels "blackened" - a process which helped to prevent the metal rusting in the salt air. These were known as Black Sea Service Muskets, and remained in service well into the middle of the 19th century.

Although Reverend Alexander Forsyth had produced working percussion locks as early as 1805, it took some time before the armed services adopted this new and untried technology. The first Percussion Sea Service Musket was designed by George Lovell, Inspector of Small Arms at the Royal Manufactory, Enfield, and was ingeniously made to use stocks of parts originally produced for flintlocks. It

was designated the 1839 Pattern Sea Service Musket, and although it retained the large calibre, smooth bore and black finish, its barrel was reduced in length to just over 30 inches. It was also fitted with a bayonet catch, though it is unlikely that the bayonets saw much use in naval service.

Rifled barrels were finally brought into naval service in 1842 when Lovell's second pattern of musket was converted by rifling the barrels with three grooves, enlarging the bore slightly to 0.758" and fitting a backsight graduated to 1000 yards. This pattern was relatively short-lived, as in 1853 the Enfield Rifle, a revolutionary design using a much smaller calibre (0.577") hollow-based bullet, was introduced into general service and rapidly replaced the old smoothbore large calibre arms.

As usual the Admiralty ordered their own model to include such details as brass furniture and a heavy barrel, and these were duly incorporated into the Pattern 1858 Naval Rifle, which was approved (rather contrarily) in 1857. It is not likely that HMS Trincomalee would have been at the top of the list for the issue of the latest model of musket, so we can assume that during her periods of service on the West Indies and Pacific Stations she would have carried the old, but nonetheless effective flintlock muskets. Brian Horton records that in 1853, the year that the Enfield Rifle was introduced, Trincomalee carried 80

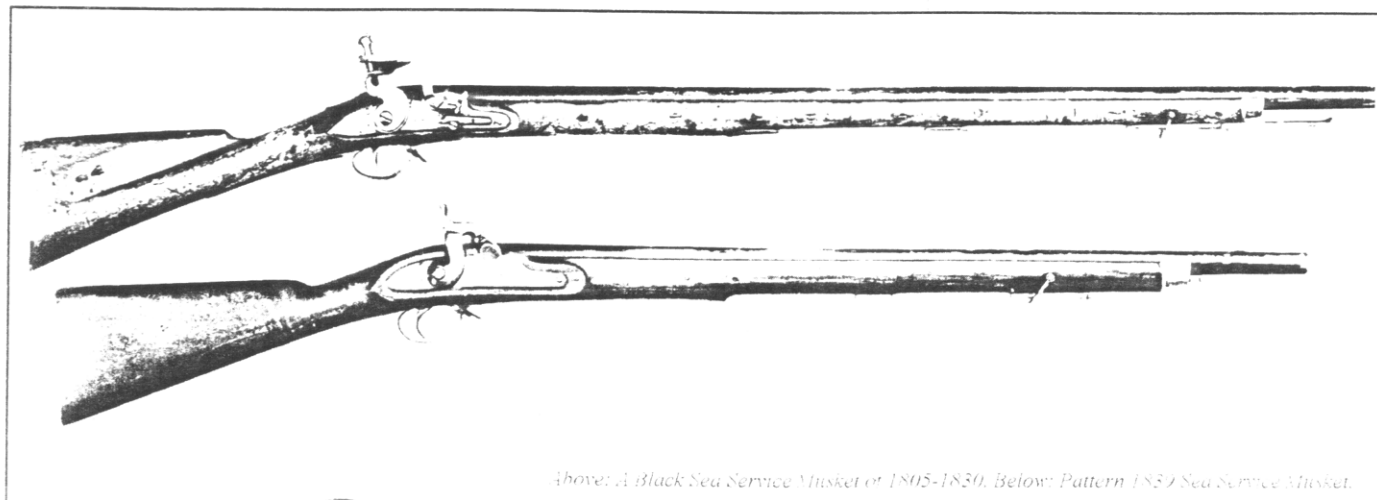
muskets and was allowed 10,560 musket cartridges. A musket cartridge at this time consisted merely of a twist of "cartridge paper" containing a lead ball and a measure of powder, all of which of course still had to be loaded from the muzzle and rammed down to the breech before the lock was primed ready for firing.

CASUALTY REPORT



'Subtraction' - gunfire spoiling sailors' 1830

Our sympathies to Ship's Warden and Chief Guide Brian Hopkins, who was injured when using pyrotechnics to simulate cannon firing during a display at the Hartlepool Nuclear Power Station's Open Day. The day being rather damp, the electrical detonating system short-circuited whilst Brian was placing a charge in the safety container and went off prematurely. Although Brian suffered a nasty shock and flash burns, he was back at his post again shortly afterwards and little the worse for his experience, though for several weeks he claimed to be unable to assist with the washing up.



Above: A Black Sea Service Musket of 1805-1820. Below: Pattern 1839 Sea Service Musket.

TRINCOMALEE IN THE NEWS..... NAUTICAL SPELLING BEE A GREAT SUCCESS

The last issue of *Quarterdeck* gave details of a **Grand Nautical Spelling Bee** at the Temperance Hall under the patronage of Captain Curtis RN, of HM Training Ship TRINCOMALEE. This took place on Tuesday, March 7th 1876, and the Durham & Cleveland Mercury reported as follows in their edition of Saturday, 11th March:

A novel experiment in the Spelling Bee Line was attempted at the Temperance Hall, Hartlepool, on Tuesday evening, in the shape of a Nautical Spelling Bee, the principal peculiarity of which consisted of a selection of sea-faring expressions and a limitation of the competition, in some of the cases, to members of the sea-faring community. There were about fifty competitors, young and old and the number would have been larger but for the restriction we have named. The arrangements were carried out, with the assistance of Mr Foster-Watson, by a committee of gentlemen friendly disposed towards the Missions to Seamen Society which has been recently established at the port in connection with the Church of England, and the proceeds, amounting in the gross to about £15, will be applied to that object.

The affair was carried out under the patronage of Captain Curtis, R.N., and His Worship the Mayor (Mr George Horsley, J.P.), both of whom were present. The prizes were more than usually valuable, but we think it a mistake that only one prize was offered in each competition. The following was the result:-

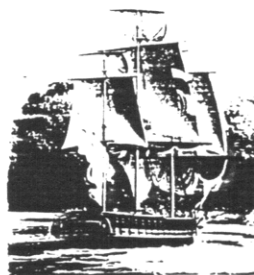
An *Aneroid Barometer and Eight Day Timepiece*, in oak, anchor pattern, value £4, open to all above the age of sixteen, was won by Mrs Baccham, of No. 1 William-street, who successfully competed against her husband; an *electro-plated teapot*, value £1, competed for by sailors, sailors' wives, or sons and daughters of seamen only, above the age of sixteen, was carried off by a member of the Naval Reserve; a *lady's work box*, value £1, open to all girls under fifteen, was won by Miss Meggie Hunter of Prissick Street School; a *writing desk*, value 18s, open to all boys under fifteen, was won by Master George Irvine, of Bath House Academy, and son of Mr Magoris Irvine; a *papier-mache inkstand*, value 15s, competed for by daughters of seamen only, under the age of fifteen, was won by Miss M. J. Taylor of Bath House Seminary; and a *papier-mache inkstand*, value 10s, competed for by sons of seamen only, under fifteen, was carried off by a lad named Granger, of the Wesleyan School. In a juvenile writing competition two special prizes were given to boys under fifteen, the best writers of the word "navigation" on the blackboard - a box of mathematical instruments to Master George Irvine and a pocket knife to Master Willie Sivewright, both pupils at Bath House Academy.

The Rev E.R. Ormsby, M.A., Rector (Hon. Chaplain of the Missions to Seamen Society) presided; Mr. Charles Lugg, Principal of Bath House Academy, officiated as interrogator; and Captain Curtis, R.N., and Messrs. J.

Merryweather, R. Walker, and J.T. Ridley as referees.

Alderman James Groves, J.P., during an interval, read a sailor's love yarn entitled "The Captain's Yarn, to Oblige the Ladies" which was apparently appreciated. The contest was also varied by several favourite nautical songs, with pianoforte accompaniments, under the superintendence of Mr George Hoggett. The vocalists were Mr and Miss Sanderson and Mr R White. The proceeds will be devoted to the building fund of the West Hartlepool Young Men's Christian Association.

BOOKS



Pitkin Pictorials, of Andover, Hants, have published a new guide to HMS TRINCOMALEE. In glossy full colour 17 x 24 cm format the Guide deals with The Building of Trincomalee, Days of Service, Life Aboard a Frigate, Training Days and Restoration in a straightforward text with excellent illustrations. Copies are available from the Visitor Centre, or Post Free to Friends of HMS Trincomalee at £2.50 per copy by sending a cheque or postal order with your order to the Friends P.O. Box on Page 4.

The arrival of this new publication coincides rather sadly with the news that the last few copies of Brian Horton's excellent booklet on the ship have now disappeared from the shelves. Published in 1979 when TRINCOMALEE was still FOUDROYANT and based in Portsmouth, Mr Horton's book contains a wealth of information, including a fully detailed specification and dimensions of the ship together with details of her armament, crew rolls from 1847 and so on. Good as the Pitkin Guide is, we hope that in due course Mr Horton's book may be revised and reprinted so that those who wish to delve a bit more deeply into the ship's history can have access to this authoritative and readable work.

LOST & FOUND

During the early stages of the restoration of the inner skin of the hull at Lower Deck level in 1992 a pile of old bones was discovered between the outer hull timbers and the inner skin a little way forward of midships. When examined by Frank Caldwell, the curator of the Hartlepool Museum, these turned out to be the remains of various parts of sheep, pigs, chickens and possibly a cow. There were also a small number of sea shells present.

Whilst the identity of the bones may have disappointed those who had hoped that they might have been human remains, and one dedicated Hartlepudlian who was convinced that they were the bones of a monkey, it does not provide an explanation as to how they should have come to be lodged in such an inaccessible part of the ship.

Almost certainly all of these animals would have been carried aboard Trincomalee at some stage to provide fresh meat, not to mention eggs and milk for the crew, so their presence in the ship is not surprising. It is possible that the Wadia shipyard workers in Bombay enjoyed a snack or two whilst they toiled, though they would probably have risked a good deal more than their jobs if they were gnawing at pork or beef bones.....

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