



Quarterdeck

The Newsletter of The Friends of HMS Trincomalee

March 1995

RESTORATION PROGRESS: SHIP TAKES SHAPE !

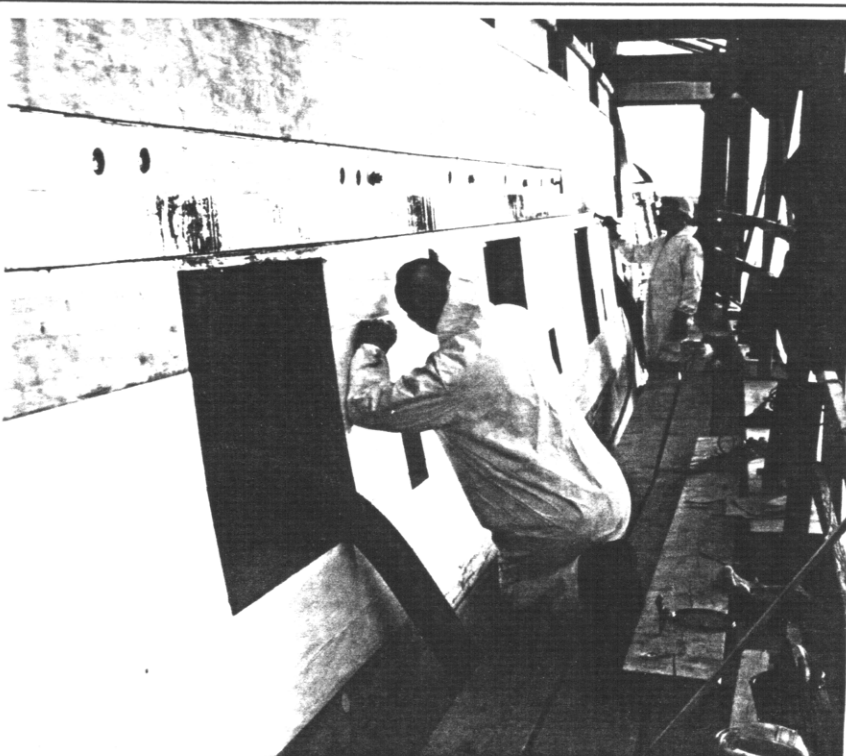
Visitors to the ship in recent weeks will have noticed that the structural repairs which have involved the replacement of large areas of the Inner and Outer linings of the ship are now complete and the elegant stern windows have been fitted - the stern galleries should be completed very shortly. More than this, the replacement catheads reported on in our last issue have now been fitted at the bow, the gundeck scuppers are in place, the mast channels are ready to receive the masts and the work on the gunports and oarports is finished. Even the casual passer by cannot fail to have noticed that the hull has slowly been emerging from its tarpaulin shrouds rather like a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis (steady on - Ed.). The reason for this dramatic change is that the frames which have for so long supported the work platforms round the outside of the hull and carried the weather protection for the restoration team who have continued in all weathers through the winter with the vital work on the hull are now being rearranged for their next role which will be to provide similar protection for the shipwrights who are poised to start stripping off the non-original weather deck sheathing prior to renewing and caulking the entire deck - work which will continue into the spring of 1996. Whilst this laborious task goes on the team will be restoring and renewing beams, the weatherdeck hatches, mast bitts, bulwark cladding, skylights, roughree rails, barricade rails and taffarel life rails - indeed all the exposed weatherdeck fittings.

Masts & Rigging

Perhaps the most dramatic work to be undertaken during the next three



Before: The outer hull sheathing removed, exposing the ship's frames in urgent need of renewal and restoration.



After: After replacement of damaged and rotten frames the outer hull sheathing is back in place and painting is in progress.

RESTORATION PROGRESS

(Continued from Page 1)

months will be the stepping of the mainmast. All going well, we can expect to see the Main Lower Mast and Topmast stepped in May. The Workshop have already completed the Fore and Fore Top Masts, the Fore Fighting Top and Tressletrees and are now busily engaged with the construction of the Bowsprit and Jibboom. All this progress means that the Riggers, who now have their own working area in the Workshop, have to start preparing the miles (literally!) of standing rigging, working from drawings and specifications prepared by the restoration team. All the rope used in the rigging is manila, and working with it is skilled and hard work. The Mainmast Stay, for example, is 96mm diameter, and after having deadeyes spliced into it must be stretched before fitting, parcelled and served to correspond as closely as possible with the original.

Historical Research

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken to establish the correct detail of the ship's original rigging, and the National Maritime Museum, Public Records Office and the US Naval Academy amongst others have provided valuable information from which the drawing team have been able to work. The Rigging Team are then presented with detailed working drawings to which they can refer. Blaise Vyner, the ship's Research Consultant, has also been preparing a booklet about the restoration project, which is sure to be of considerable interest to the Friends of the ship - more news of this in our next issue.

Members who are technically minded and are interested in the finer details of the ship's construction might like to consult David White's magnificent book *"Diana, Anatomy of a Frigate"*, published by Conway Maritime Press Ltd in 1987 (ISBN 0 85177 356 7) and obtainable through the National Maritime Museum or from any good bookshop (or ask your local library). Better still, try to visit the ship soon, as the restoration is at a particularly interesting and dramatic stage.

Who are

THE BOUNTY BOYS?

Among the Friends of HMS Trincomalee we can count several members of the Bounty Boys Association, and we are indebted to Mr L. Merrin of Northallerton who has kindly supplied some information about this organisation.

The name originates from the Navy League, which started the "Bounty Scheme" in the early days of World War II, enabling suitable Cadets from the Sea Cadet Corps to gain direct entry into the Royal Navy as communications ratings. The first point of entry for this scheme was T.S. "Bounty" at Worcester, which gave its name to the scheme. Mr Merrin joined on 1st September 1943 as a 17-year old "Boy 2nd Class" and spent five "very enjoyable" weeks on board HMS Foudryant (now Trincomalee) before moving on to HMS Royal Arthur (at Skegness) and HMS Scotia (at Ayr) for training as a Fleet Signaller. It appears that Foudryant/Trincomalee was used for Bounty Scheme training until 1947.

Entrants were recruited from the Sea Cadet Corps which has its origins in the Navy League Boys' Naval Brigade, formed in 1910 which in due course became the Navy League Sea Cadet Corps in 1919. Captain A.E. Thomson RN (Rtd), a Past President of the Bounty Boys Association, recalls that there were over 60 Units and nearly 10,000 lads in the Corps at the outbreak of World War II - a splendid source of recruits who would already have some knowledge of morse and semaphore (in Captain Thomson's words "part-trained sparkers and bunting-tossers"). Indeed in 1942 the Admiralty took over the whole organisation and the Corps expanded rapidly in co-ordination with the "Warship Weeks" organised to raise funds for new battleships and by the time the first of the Bounty Boys were putting to sea there were 400 Units with a membership of over 50,000 cadets. The present Sea Cadet Association emerged from this organisation in 1976 when the Navy League finally disappeared.

Mr Merrin kindly included the following explanatory note, written by one Bill Hobbs - a Bounty Boy of course:

WHAT IS A BOUNTY BOY?

A Bounty Boy is one who was here before television, the pill, penicillin, polio shots and antibiotics. We were here before frozen food, nylon, radar, fluorescent lights, credit cards and ballpoint pens. For us, time sharing meant togetherness, a chip was a piece of wood or potato, hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word. Girls never wore trousers, we were before tights, drip dry clothes, dishwashers, tumble driers, freezers and electric blankets, before men wore long hair and earrings and women wore dinner suits.

We were here before yoghurt, the 40 hour week and the National Health Service. We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you get?). We were here before Frank Sinatra and cup sizing for bras.

Girls wore Peter Pan collars and thought cleavage was something the butchers did. We were here before Batman, DDT and vitamin pills, disposable nappies, ozone, jeeps, pizzas, instant coffee and decaffeinated anything. Wimpy, MacDonalds and Burger King were unheard of, as were metrication and decimalisation.

We were here before word processors, electronic music, and disco dancing. In our day smoking was fashionable, grass was for mowing, coke was something you burnt in the stove and pot was something you cooked in. A "gay" person was the life and soul of the party and nothing more, while AIDS meant beauty lotions or help for people in trouble.

We are today's Senior Citizens, a hardy bunch when you think how our world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. The following was seen on the window of a coach carrying Bounty Boys on a day's outing:

RECYCLED SEA CADETS.

Small Arms of HMS Trincomalee.....3

THE SEA SERVICE PISTOL

The British Navy's Sea Service Pistol of the Napoleonic era was a 12" barrelled flintlock of .56" calibre with a heavy walnut stock and brass fittings, fitted with a long sprung belt hook on its left side. These pistols were normally issued in pairs to boarding parties and to fighting crew engaged in repelling boarders. Smooth bored, they were a deadly effective weapon at close range, but having once been fired became effectively useless as the time and concentration required for reloading them in the midst of boarding operations would undoubtedly have proved fatal to the user. The fired weapon could either be flung at the enemy or used to parry cutlass blows. Indeed, in 1812, sailors in boarding parties were encouraged not to discharge their pistols at the defenders as they came alongside and then throw them away, but to "reserve their pistols in their belts until they gain the gunwale or deck of the enemy's ships using the cutlass for defence. This leaves the left hand disengaged to assist their movements. Having gained the deck or footing, the pistol can then be drawn from the belt with the left hand and, being thrown across the (left) arm serves as a guard

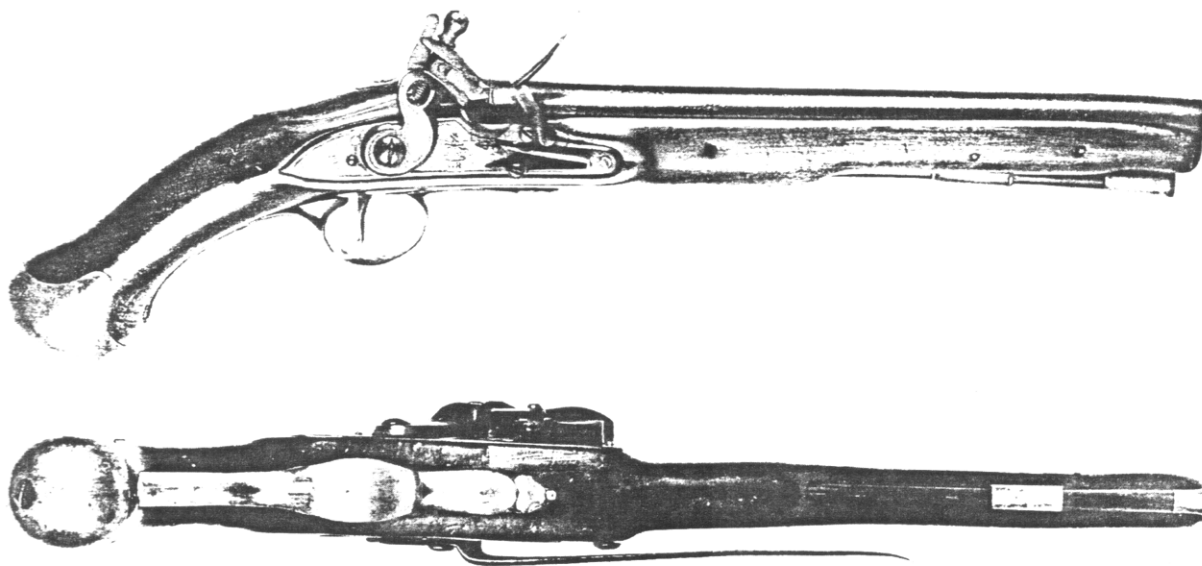
and preserves a formidable weapon in case of any accident depriving a man of his cutlass or right hand, and if attacked by an untrained man it is onlie for him to receive the blow aimed at his head on the pistol and with the cutlass dispatch his opponent, who has thrown himself quite open to that blow or thrust.." Whether boarding crews remembered this advice in the excitement of the battle is not known. After the Napoleonic wars a shorter pistol was adopted, with a 9" rather than a 12" barrel, but fundamentally the same - indeed many of the 12" barrelled weapons were cut down to this size and remained in use until the 1830s when the last pattern of flintlock pistol was introduced, sporting a swivel ramrod to prevent loss of this important item during fighting or loading. Within ten years a single shot percussion pistol of more manageable size was issued to the Royal Navy and the flintlocks were gradually phased out. In 1853 Brian Horton records that HMS Trincomalee was allowed a complement of 46 pistols and 3900 cartridges for their use. A future article will deal with the percussion pistol in more detail.



Jamsetjee Bomanjee Wadia, Master Builder of the Bombay Dockyard

WADIA FOUNDATION SUPPORTS**RESTORATION FUND**

HMS Trincomalee Trust has received a generous and substantial donation towards its Restoration Fund from the Sir Ness Wadia Foundation, established by the descendants of Jamsetjee Bomanjee Wadia, under whose direction HMS Trincomalee was built at Bombay. The Wadias, a well known and highly respected family in Bombay, built a series of ships for the Royal Navy as well as for the Hon. East India Company. More about this remarkable family in our next issue.



Top: A Sea Service Pistol of 1808 bearing the cipher of George III on the lockplate.

Below: The same pistol viewed from below, showing the long belt hook to the left hand side.

Trincomalee in the News.....

Not Goodbye, but Au Revoir

On Monday, 8th February, 1877, HMS Trincomalee left West Hartlepool for Southampton in tow of HMS Valorous. The townspeople felt a genuine sense of loss at her departure, after fourteen years as a training vessel in their port. The South Durham Herald published the following account of her departure later that week. Little did anyone suspect at the time that over 100 years later she would return....

THE DEPARTURE OF THE OLD TRINCOMALEE

An event of no slight interest to the maritime population of the Hartlepoons, and indeed to the majority of the inhabitants of both towns, was the removal of Her Majesty's ship Trincomalee from West Hartlepool on Monday evening. The vessel had been a conspicuous object in the docks at West Hartlepool for close upon 14 years, and had during that time been the training station of a large number of the Royal Naval Reserve men. Having been here for so long a period, the ship had naturally become identified with the port; and when it became known a few months ago that the Admiralty, for some reason or other, had made up its mind to remove it to Southampton, a feeling of surprise and displeasure was very generally expressed, and the Town Improvement Commission, on the recommendation of one of its body (Mr George Hardy) made an effort to induce the Government to alter its decision. A memorial was prepared, in which it was shewn that during the period the vessel had been stationed here the Naval Reserve men had increased from 109 to upwards of 400. It also represented the large number of men who had been drilled, and gave an estimate of the number that was likely to come up during the next six months, and set forth the inconvenience and detriment to the Royal Naval Reserve that would be likely to result upon the vessel's removal. The memorial was despatched to Mr I. L. Bell, the member for the borough, who duly forwarded it to the proper quarter, and in a short time afterwards a reply was received stating that the Lords of the Admiralty regretted they could not comply with the request. This reply being considered decisive, no further efforts were made by the local authorities to prevent the proposed

departure, but attention was called to the matter from time to time in the columns of this paper; and as weeks passed on and the vessel still remained, an impression got abroad that the Government had after all changed its mind, and it was confidently believed that the Trincomalee would be allowed to stay. This, however, turned out to be a delusion, and on Monday night the vessel suddenly and finally took her leave of the port. As it may be of some interest to our readers to learn the exact period that the ship has been stationed here, we have been at some pains to collect the following facts:-

The Trincomalee (which it is said was built in India for the East India Company and presented by them to the Government), under command of Captain Field, R.N., arrived at West Hartlepool from Sunderland, where she had been stationed for some time as a training ship for the Royal Naval Reserve, on Tuesday, the 16th of June 1863. She was towed into the bay by three steamers, and in one of the steamers was stationed the band of the 4th Durham Artillery Volunteer Corps, which, as the vessel entered, played "Rule, Britannia" and several other national airs. A large crowd assembled on the docks and on the piers to witness the arrival, and in making for the harbour, Captain Field, in compliment to the inhabitants of the Hartlepoons, fired a salute from the Trincomalee, which was responded to by the 4th Durham Artillery Volunteers, from their battery at West Hartlepool, and a salvo of artillery was also fired from the harbour and the docks. The Band continued its national strains until the ship was safely moored when, after several rounds of cheers had been given for the Queen, the Trincomalee, &c., &c., the band played through the town, and it was some time before the dock heads were cleared of the immense crowd who hung about the neighbourhood of the ship in groups. Such was the entry into West Hartlepool. Her departure was attended with less ceremony. But before speaking of that we may state that for some time after her arrival here in 1863 she was daily visited by large numbers of the inhabitants, who were allowed free access on board, and to whom, for a considerable period, she continued to be a source of great attraction. During her stay here she has been commanded by eight different captains. Capt. Field, who remained with her about 18 months after her arrival, was succeeded by Capt. Pollard, and then Capt. Nott, Capt. Meade, Capt. White, Capt. Kinnahan, Capt. Brooks and Capt. Collins (the latter being in command on her departure), took charge of her in succession. A day or two before her departure, Capt. Collins was made aware that the decision of the Admiralty was

actually to be put into force, but the fact was not generally known in the town until Her Majesty's Frigate Valorous (whose name was familiarly known in connection with the recent Arctic expedition), put in an appearance in the bay early on Monday morning, when the news spread "like wildfire". Not being able to enter the harbour, the Valorous, which was commissioned to tow the Trincomalee to Southampton, remained in the offing, but some of the officers and crew visited the town during the day, and caused no little sensation among the inhabitants. The preparations for the departure having been completed, the Trincomalee left her moorings shortly after eight o'clock. By instructions from the Harbour Master (Mr Stobbs) she was taken through the North Lock, and from thence she was towed by the steam tug Conqueror, assisted by the William Charles, out into the bay. The dock head and both the north and south piers were crowded with people to witness the departure. A drum and fife band from Middleton marched along the north pier playing a lively melody as the vessel proceeded along the harbour, and as she passed out between the piers a loud cheer was raised by the spectators, which was heartily responded to by those on board. The cheering lasted as long as the vessel was discernable, but this was only for a short time, as the night being dark, she was soon out of sight. It was eleven o'clock, however, before she got fairly under weigh in tow of the Valorous, the towing tackle, which consisted of two six-inch steel hawsers, taking a considerable time to adjust. We may state, as a rather remarkable fact, that Mr. James Pounder, who piloted her into West Hartlepool 14 years ago, had the honour of conducting her out again.

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