



Quarterdeck

The Newsletter of The Friends of HMS Trincomalee

April 2000

AFLOAT AGAIN - BUT WHERE TO NOW?

Another milestone in the restoration of HMS Trincomalee was passed on February 8th 2000 when seawater was let into the dry dock at the Historic Quay and water lapped around the hull of the ship for the first time since August 1996.

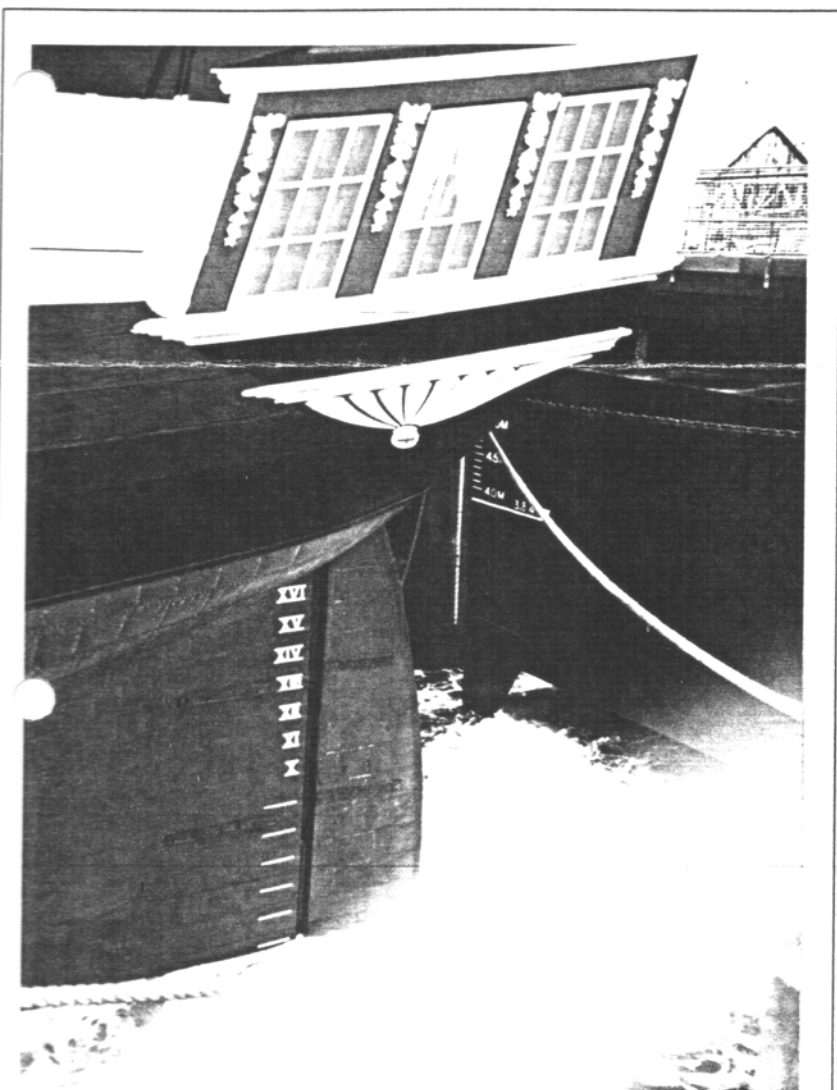
The restoration team looked on with interest as the water level

rose, and subsequent examination showed that, as expected, the hull was sound and watertight, with only a very small amount of water detectable in the bilges following the reconstruction of the hull and its recaulking, felting and coppering. At this stage the dock was not fully flooded, and the keel remained on the blocks, but it was a great pleasure to see the ship once more in its natural element.

A week later, on February 16th, under the watchful eye of Mr John Pereira of the Liverpool and Glasgow Salvage Association, the drydock was further flooded and at around 10.30 the stern and then the bow lifted off the blocks as the ship came afloat on almost an even keel after three and a half years in drydock. The draft marks on the hull showed that she was slightly down by the head, drawing 14'5" at the bow and 14'4½" by the stern., and she had a barely perceptible list to starboard of just ½°.

Having lifted off the blocks, the ship was moved slightly for'ard so that the areas of the keel which had been sitting on the blocks could be exposed for coppering.

The water level was allowed to rise so that the keel was a foot above the keel blocks, and inclining experiments were carried out. These involved the moving of concrete weights about the deck and recording the effect on strategically placed pendulums in order to establish the metacentric height (GM) from which the stability of the ship can be gauged. For those interested in technical matters, the GM turned out to be 2'4". From the data recorded during the inclining experiments it has been possible for Mr Pereira to calculate the effect of



*February 2000: water swirls around the rudder of HMS Trincomalee as the drydock is flooded preparatory to refloating..
(photo HMS Trincomalee Trust)*

installing the anchors, yards and booms which are still ashore at this stage.

Divers were able to establish that the keel of the ship was hogged by just over 4" (that is to say a slightly concave profile of the keel, once the ship was afloat, "hogging" being the opposite of the more self-explanatory "sagging").

The day following the completion of the inclining tests, the water level in the dock was reduced by pumping until the keel once more rested safely on the blocks, and the waterlevel was returned to 13 feet, where it will remain until the ship is ready to leave the dock.

As a matter of interest, it was possible to establish the displacement weight of the ship during the tests at 1,170.75 tonnes.

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

For some time now the Trust has been in negotiation with the property developers active in the Hartlepool Marina area with a view to a joint enterprise in the provision of shoreside facilities for the ship on the Trust's waterside site in Jackson Dock, where she lay for the first stages of her restoration. These plans, involving the developer

taking over the site and constructing a building incorporating premises for the visitors' centre, education and interpretation facilities as well as a workshop for the maintenance of the ship, were at an advanced stage when earlier this month the developers unexpectedly decided, for commercial reasons unconnected with the Trust, to withdraw from the project.

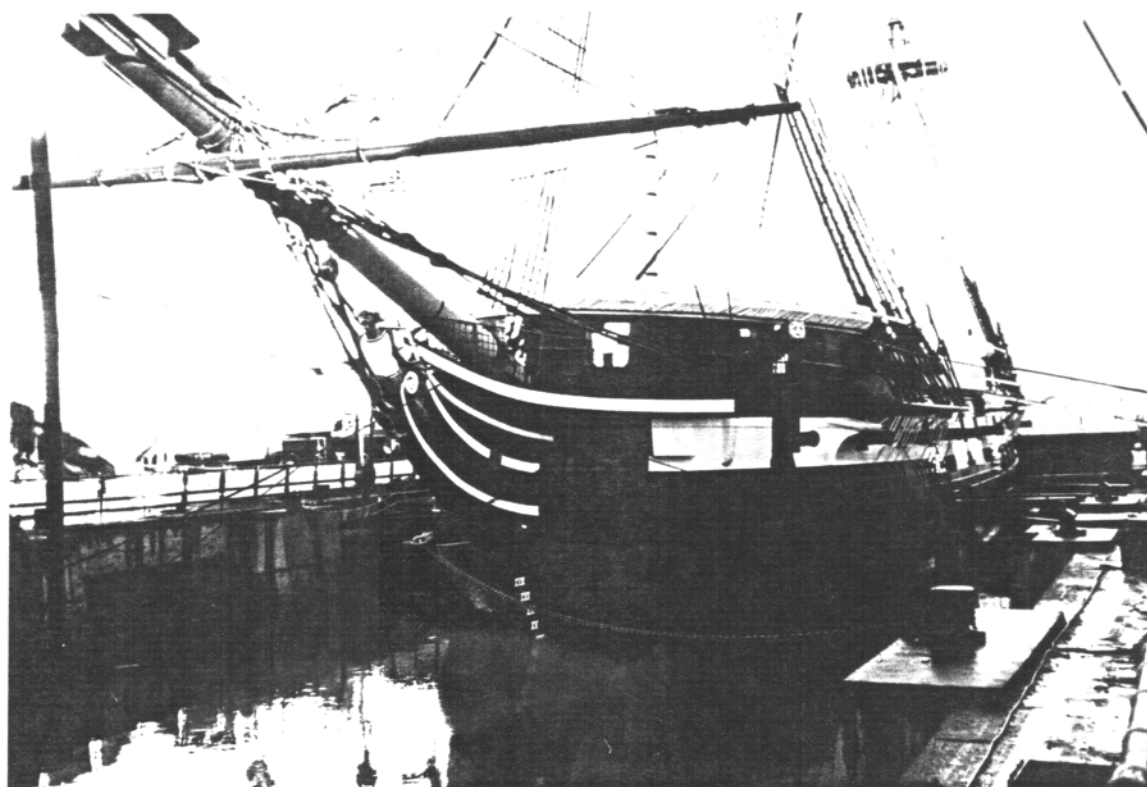
This leaves the ship afloat, but the plans for the new berth and facilities high and dry until some other way can be found to finance the provision of shore facilities.

Plans to float the ship out of the Historic Quay in May have therefore been shelved until the position can be re-assessed and a new plan of campaign developed.

Needless to say this is a disappointing setback for the Trust, who will now need to find a new partner for a commercial development or attempt to raise the considerable sum needed to build its own facilities. Either way, it seems that the ship must remain for the time being in the Historic Quay, whose owners, Hartlepool Borough Council, have been extremely accommodating and supportive of the project.

*HMS
Trincomalee
rises off her
keel-blocks
on the 16th
February
as the water
level reaches
14'5" on her
bow.*

*Photo:
Keith Johnson
HMS
Trincomalee
Trust*



Lieutenant George Palmer's Diary: August 1856

Date	In Esquimalt Harbor - Vancouver's Id
August 1856. 30 th Indians	<p>4th L. All. - Embarked on board the Hudson Bay Company's steamer "Otter", with 2 Companies of Bluejackets - the marines embarking on board the "Trincomalee". The following is the list of the officers, seamen and marines who formed the expedition -</p>

Colonel Ronnie Palmer of West Sussex has kindly sent us a copy of the Diary kept by his grandfather, Lieutenant (later Rear Admiral) George Palmer. Lieut. Palmer was serving aboard HMS Monarch (84 guns) when in August 1856 he took part in the expedition to Cowichan on Vancouver Island to tackle a band of renegade Somenos Indians led by one *Tathlasut*.

Matters had come to head when a settler was reportedly shot by *Tathlasut*'s band, and Rear Admiral Bruce, aboard HMS Monarch, was requested by Governor James Douglas to provide a small force to "*teach those savages to respect the lives and property of Her Majesty's subjects*".

HMS Monarch had anchored in Esquimalt Harbour on August 11th, and was joined the next day by HMS Trincomalee, freshly arrived from the Sandwich Islands. Lieutenant Palmer's diary takes up the tale:

20-28th August. Beautiful weather - on the 26th dressed ship and fired a royal salute in honour of HRH Prince Albert's birthday. Employed painting and watering. Parties on shore cutting down trees etc.

29th August. The "Otter", a steamer belonging to the Hudson Bay Company, came round to Esquimalt. Supplied her with water butts. She is to tow the "Trincomalee" round to Cowichan Bay.

30th August. 8am. Embarked on board the Hudson Bay Company's steamer "Otter", with two companies of Bluejackets - the Marines embarking on board the "Trincomalee". The following is the list of officers, seamen and marines who formed the expedition -

Com^d Connolly, commanding the expedition, L^{ts} Scott, Palmer, Miller and Mess^{rs} Evans & Price, commanding companies of blue jackets: 60 men each with 4 bearers to each company, the latter carry the mess kettles &c.

Lt Haverfield, commanding the detachment of marines -

L^{ts} McMeekan, Clendon and Arbuckle, each in command of companies. Lt Scott, R.N. taking charge of the two field pieces

- the mates, midshipmen, non-commissioned officers, each with their respective companies; the whole formed a detachment of 423 officers and men.

The little "Otter", under command of Capt. Mowatt H.B.C. towed the "Trincomalee" in first rate style, averaging 5 knots per hour - we passed numerous islands, well-wooded and where deer were plentiful and, after steering through a narrow passage, anchored at 6pm at the head of Cowichan Bay, Vancouver Is. Directly we anchored the Indians came alongside in their canoes and professed great friendship - they well know the object of the expedition, as the Governor had sent word a fortnight previous that he was coming to take the assassin.

31st August. As soon as it was high water (1pm) the whole force landed, each man carrying a blanket rolled up and slung across his shoulders, and a tin pannikin to his waistbelt. The Governor had landed with his Canadian guard (13 men) in order to reconnoitre and pick out a suitable place of debarkation. After pulling into the mouth of the river which was rather shallow in some parts and very tortuous, we landed and marched the men up to a hill where the

Lieutenant George Palmer's Diary: 1856 (continued):

Governor had pitched his tent – the 2 field pieces between the seamen and marines – and after little trouble and labour in getting the latter customers up, we encamped very snugly. This hill commanded the whole country within gunshot. The men were ordered to clear away the bush which was rather too thick to be comfortable on the right, which they did very smartly and everybody was huddled in good style, the camp kettles boiling and sentries placed in about two hours from our landing (4.30 pm).

I was on guard the first night and visited the chain of sentries every hour. Kept a sharp lookout for any lurking Indians. About 2 o'clock in the middle watch I heard a sentry challenge on the right and, no answer being returned, I ran towards him. No answer being returned to his second challenge, I asked him if he saw anything and he said he saw something moving about near the bush. I turned the guard out and brought them down to the spot. By this time the Governor, Captain C. and several of the officers and men had come down as they all slept with one eye open. We were

on the point of firing into what I supposed to be an Indian covered with a blanket creeping along on all fours, when somebody cried out that it was a white dog! Lo and behold it was: this was our first adventure.

1st September. The Reveille sounded at 4.30am and it began to drizzle but cleared up in about an hour. A section from each company went down to the river which ran at the foot of the hill to bathe and bring water for breakfast. Their being relieved by others, the whole force was ready for inspection, arms clean &c., and on parade by 8.30 am. However, smoking black pipes appeared to be the order of the day as, soon after parade, the rain came down. As everybody was huddled, we smoked, told stories and sang songs till I believe many of us fancied ourselves in the Crimea and carousing after a battle. The Governor had in the meantime sent a friendly message to the chiefs of the village in which the murderer resided and an answer or deputation could not be expected until the next day.

In the best tradition of all cliffhangers, the conclusion of Lt Palmer's account will appear in the next issue of Quarterdeck.

WELCOME GIFT FROM CORUS

Cutting Corus's 4" x 4" steel bar into handy blocks for additional ballast. (photo: Keith Johnson)

Following the inclining experiments carried out in February, the requirement for ballasting the ship to provide correct trim and stability has been calculated. This highlighted a need for about 50 tonnes of additional ballast, over and above the quantity of original pig iron ballast that the ship has retained. Corus Group (formerly British Steel) came to the rescue in the form of 50 tonnes of 4" x 4" steel bar, part of which has now been cut into manageable sized blocks, virtually the same as the original pig iron ballast. 25 tonnes has already been painted, transported to the ship and manhandled into position in the lower hull – a backbreaking task, given the low headroom and difficult access to some parts of the bilges.

CHAIRMAN TO STEP DOWN

Captain David T Smith RN, Chairman of the HMS Trincomalee Trust, has announced that he will relinquish his post in June this year.

Captain Smith has led the Trust through the entire restoration process, and the progress that is evident today is almost entirely due to his energy and enthusiasm for the project, coupled with a quiet determination to overcome the various setbacks and difficulties that have been encountered on the way. The Trustees have asked Captain Smith to become President of the Trust with effect from the date of his resignation as Chairman.

Captain Smith will hand over the chair to Colonel Michael Stewart, who is currently Vice Chairman.

WEB SITE LAUNCHED

HMS Trincomalee Trust now has its own website, where visitors can find information about the ship, the Trust and the progress of restoration, illustrated with some colourful photographs.

To find it, point your web browser at www.hms-trincomalee.co.uk

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