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# QUARTERDECK

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The Friends of HMS Trincomalee

Summer 2022



**Lieutenant George Palmer's diary**

**Opera Comique on board TS Foudroyant**

**Slops and the Slop-book**

**Notice of Annual General Meeting**

**Mess Deck Cryptic Crossword**

*Notice is given of our:*

**Annual General Meeting 2022**  
**Wednesday 7<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 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021
3. Chairman’s report
4. Treasurer’s report and accounts ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022
5. Appointment of Trustees
6. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
7. Any other business (Notified to the Secretary prior to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022)

The closing date for all nominations to be received by the Secretary is Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022.

Those members wishing to attend the “zoom” meeting on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 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

Towards the end of summer in the 1980s, when our ship, then TS Foudroyant, was moored at Portsmouth it was often used as a floating theatre by the local "Opera Comique". The front cover shows the company performing the Pirates of Penzance in 1984, and I thank Nigel Smith for providing the correspondence within.

Moving back in time, to 1856, in her second commission as HMS Trincomalee, officers and crew from the ship were involved in a confrontation with some native Indians on Vancouver Island. The incident around Cowichan has been mentioned before in the Quarterdeck, in this issue are the complete existing diary entries by Lieutenant George Palmer relating to the incident.

Our next Annual General Meeting will be held on 7<sup>th</sup> December as notified on the opposite page. As last year it will be an online event. I am looking forward to visiting the ship next week for the first time since the pandemic started, and meeting up with committee members at the Historic Quay. Any Friend of HMS Trincomalee who is interested in helping out with our charity is encouraged to make contact with any committee member.

As in previous summer editions, the crossword is in cryptic form.

Hugh Turner

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

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**Pinewood Lodge, Hude, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle,**  
**County Durham DL112 0QW**  
**Tel: 01833 640825 E-mail:**  
**[secretary@friendsofhmstrincomalee.org.uk](mailto:secretary@friendsofhmstrincomalee.org.uk)**

*Correspondence and contributions for the magazine to:*

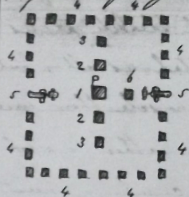
**The Editor, Hugh Turner**  
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Sept. 1886. From Vancouver's Id. to San Francisco.

Sept. 1886.  
good

Description of 2nd encampment.

all gave them a decided advantage over us had they been disposed to have come to warlike measures, but they well knew that whatever for? Douglas and his white men said, they would do, they always did - they knew this from past experience - We encamped in the middle of a small plain close to the banks of a small river - this was about 5.30 P.M. the sun began to beat them - below as fast as they could as the rain had been coming down for the last 4 hours - we lived out an extra allowance of rum, and made each man drink it as he answered his name - dinner was then cooked and fire blazing in front of each hut - (one section of a company occupied 1 hut) in this form -



- 1 - Governor's tent.
- 2, 2 - Officers' tents.
- 3, 3 - Commissariat tents.
- 4, 4, 4, 4 - Men's huts.
- 5, 5 - Field pieces.
- 6 - Canadians' hut.

Sentries were placed all round the camp at 50 paces during the night, and 100 on the day - We slept all that night on the wet ground, in fact everything was wet and miserable - but with the help of plenty of hot Jagg, &

A page from the diary of Lieutenant George Palmer RN

# The Diary of Lieutenant George Palmer RN

In a preface to extracts from his grandfather's diary, in 2000 Colonel Palmer wrote:

"My grandfather was born in 1829 and entered the Royal Navy in 1845, rising to the rank of Rear Admiral. He was serving in HMS President, flagship of the Pacific Fleet, in August 1854 when the Anglo-French fleet attacked the Russian base at Petropaulovsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula. He was wounded in that attack.

In September 1855 he transferred to HMS Monarch (84 guns), Captain George Patey, and bearing the flag of Rear Admiral Henry William Bruce, Commander-in-Chief on the Pacific Station. On 9<sup>th</sup> May 1856 Monarch sailed from the Fleet's main base at Valparaiso and, after spending some time at Callao and the Sandwich Islands, dropped anchor in Esquimalt harbour, Vancouver Island on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1856."

Colonel Palmer provided the then Editor of the Quarterdeck with photocopies of pages from the original diary which related to HMS Trincomalee, together with a transcription in hard copy form. The following are extracts from Lieutenant George Palmer's diary in 1856:

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"12 Aug. Party on shore, cutting wood. At 4pm arrived HMS Trincomalee from the Sandwich Islands.

13 Aug. Shifted topmasts. Although we did it in slow time, were very little over 2 hours.

15 Aug. Discharged 2 Marines to the 'Trincomalee' for passage to England.

19 Aug. Vancouver's Island appears in the same rude state as it was two years ago – no wonder, as long as the Hudson's Bay Company have the grant of the Island.

20-28 Aug. Beautiful weather – on the 26<sup>th</sup> 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..

29 Aug. 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.

30 Aug. 8am. Embarked on board the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer 'Otter', with two 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:

Comd Connolly, commanding the expedition – Lts Scott, Palmer & Miller and Messrs Evans and Price, commanding companies of bluejackets, 60 men each with 4 bearers to each company, the latter carry the mess kettles etc.

Lt Haverfield, commanding detachment of marines

Lts McMeekan, Clendon and Arbuckle, each in command of companies

Lt Scott RN taking charge of the 2 field pieces

The mates, midshipmen and 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 Mowett 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. Directly we anchored the Indians came alongside in their canoes and professed great friendship. They well knew the object of the expedition as the Governor had sent word a fortnight previous that he was coming to take the assassin of an English settler.

31 Aug. 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 waist-belt. The Governor had landed with his Canadian guard (13 men) in order to reconnoitre and pick out a suitable place for 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 Governor had pitched his tent – the 2 field pieces between the seamen and marines. After a 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 that was rather too thick to be comfortable on the right, which they did very smartly and everyone was hutted in good style, the camp kettles boiling and sentries placed in about two hours from our landing (4.30pm).

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.

1 Sep. The Reveille was 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 up water for breakfast. Their being relieved by others, the whole force was ready for inspection, arms clean etc., and on parade by 8.30am. However smoking black pipes appeared to be the order of the day as, soon after parade, the rain came down. As everyone was huddled, we smoked, told stories and sang songs till 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.

2 Sep. Two of the chiefs came to have a 'talk' with the Governor. They said they could not give the man up and the Governor must go and take him. They said that he was a bad man but had some friends, however they would do all in their power to keep on friendly terms with us, etc., etc..

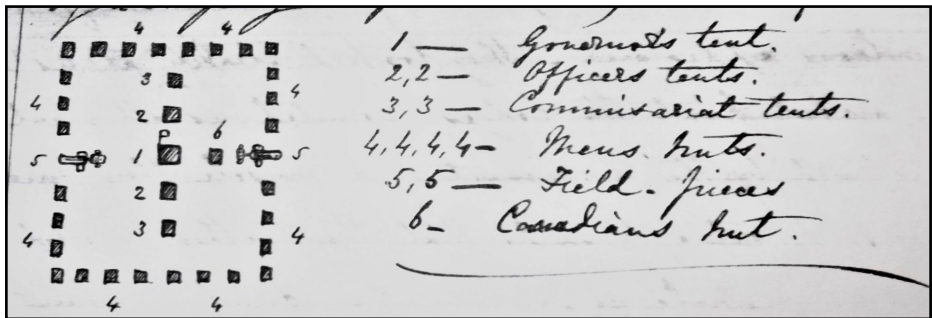
At 9 am we made ready for the march and left the encampment, crossing the river in 7 or 8 small canoes. The 2 field pieces were dismantled and conveyed by water the whole way to our second encampment. The first mile was without any path and amongst long grass about 7 feet high. However the advanced guard, composed of a Lt of Marines and 30 men, cleared away all obstacles with the assistance of the Canadians and our own pioneers.

In about an hour we got into what they called a track, but nobody but Indians could attempt to get through the trunks of trees, the bushes, etc. that thickly beset this same track. However we managed to jam through them and, after crossing the river at two different bends, we found ourselves in comparatively clear country. The rain began to fall heavily and everyone was wet through to the skin.

We passed an Indian village about 3pm – all the braves turned out, armed with long guns (flint locks) and knives. They were a dirty looking lot, but most of them fine looking, active men, faces all covered with different colours and their long

hair, ornamented with the white down of birds, gave them a savage and hideous appearance. They looked steadily at us as we marched past the lodges, counted us all, but never betrayed by the movement of a muscle their uneasiness. We found out afterwards that they rather regretted allowing us to penetrate so far into their country when they might, had they been so pleased, have caused us serious annoyance as our road was so bad, our field pieces worse than useless on the march, and our ignorance of the country, combined with our limited experience of bush fighting, all gave them a decided advantage over us had they been disposed to have come to warlike measures, but they well knew that whatever Governor Douglas and his white men said, they would do, they always did – they knew this from past experience -.

We encamped in the middle of a small plain close to the banks of a small river, this was about 5.30pm. The men began to hut themselves as best as they could as the rain had been coming down for the last 4 hours – we served out an extra allowance of rum, and made each man drink it as he answered his name – dinner was then cooked and fires blazing in front of each hut (One section of a company occupied 1 hut) in this form:



Sentries were placed all round the camp at 50 paces during the night, and 100 in the day. We slept all that night on the wet ground, in fact everything was wet and miserable, but with the help of plenty of hot grog, and tobacco we slept tolerably well. [...] We fancied ourselves nearer than ever to the Crimea that night.

3 Sep. The next morning was drier; showers every now and then. About 10am, there was a report that the murderer was in the village we had passed yesterday evening, about a mile from the camp. At 2pm, all the Indians were seen

advancing towards the camp, with their war paint on, and making a hideous low, yelling,”

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At this point the diary has the entry: FOR THE REST SEE PRIVATE JOURNAL.

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# Mess Deck Crossword

Spring 2022

**Solution:**

	B		C				S		S		C		A	
L	I	G	H	T	E	S	T		C	H	U	R	C	H
	B		I		B		A		L		T		R	
S	L	I	M		B	E	L	L	E	I	S	L	E	
	E		N		S		L		R		U			
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R	O	D	E	N	T		S	E	T	T	L	E	R	S
	K		S		Y		M				Y		S	

## Opera Comique on board TS Foudroyant



*HMS Pinafore performed on TS Foudroyant by Opera Comique*

In the 1980s when our ship, as TS Foudroyant, was moored at Portsmouth it was used as an appropriate setting for performances by Opera Comique, based in Portsmouth. Appropriate that is because of the Gilbert and Sullivan operatic pieces chosen.

The dates of these performances by Opera Comique were:

28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> August 1982 HMS Pinafore

27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> August 1983 HMS Pinafore

25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> August 1984 Pirates of Penzance

23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> August 1986 Pirates of Penzance

29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> August 1987 HMS Pinafore

Do any Friends have memories of these?

I am grateful to Nigel Smith of Opera Comique for providing the photographs taken of the performances. In his email to me in June he wrote:

“... I have happy memories of those performances, all of which I was accompanist on my keyboard. The most magical part was ... that the second Act of HMS Pinafore starts with the Captain’s song to the Moon, and on several occasions the moon rose over Portsmouth Harbour at exactly the right moment. It was also magical that the whole audience had to be rowed out to the ship.

What I have found is a review of one of the performances (I think 1983) in the local Portsmouth News ... Many of the cast slept on board TS Foudroyant and had some memorable nights! There were other memorable events, e.g. I remember our conductor’s music blowing away into the water....

Many of the Opera Comique singers have now retired and we are currently considering future plans, but they are likely to be less ambitious as there is much less enthusiasm for Gilbert and Sullivan locally than there used to be. A few of our members, including myself, have recently been involved in a couple of performances of Trial by Jury in Beaumaris, Anglesey, where our Musical Director for the past years now lives ...”

*From the Portsmouth News:*

## **MAGIC OF THE OPERA AFLOAT**

An enchanted evening afloat was for me not only the highspot of Maritime Portsmouth, but also one of life’s most magical occasions.

Two performances only of “H.M.S. Pinafore” were given by Opera Comique over the week-end and I was lucky enough to be at the first, on a moonlit Saturday night, aboard T.S. Foudroyant.

The Italian tallship Amerigo Vespucci, twinkled beyond the deck of Foudroyant which became the natural stage of “Pinafore”, curious boat-owners chugged alongside and swopped sallies with the opera’s own “sailors,” while night obligingly fell in the interval in time for Captain Corcoran’s serenade to the moon, which opens Act Two.

This simple idea, to stage the Portsmouth-set opera at sea, turned into a

spectacular success, and the only drawback was that, even with full houses at both performances, only 400 [?] could see this wonderful show.

Let's "give three cheers and one cheer more" for Opera Comique and its artistic director Kevin Sivyer, for casting the spell, and the Foudroyant for providing the means. I hope the privileged few who saw the results of this inspired partnership will urge further performances. A repeat of this marvellous experiment would be a highly suitable addition to future Portsmouth Festivals.

The highly experienced crew of soloists and chorus took only one rehearsal aboard the ship to stage this memorable "Pinafore." A brisk breeze and albeit appropriate noises off never threatened the voices of the principals of whom Vic Hill as Corcoran, Chris Doman as Sir Joseph, Vara Williams as Buttercup, Madeline Grant as Josephine and Margaret Thorpe as Hebe gave particularly striking performances.

After this success the possibilities are endless: "Yeoman of the Guard" at Southsea Castle, "Trial by Jury" in the Crown Court, or back to sea for "Gondoliers" or "The Pirates of Penzance."

Please, please let us have more of this.

C.S.



*Palace Green Brass Quintet, from Durham University in the Captain's cabin 2013*

The website for the Friends of HMS Trincomalee is freely accessible to all, and has an extensive archive relating to the ship's history and people associated with her over her 205 year history.

## The Friends of HMS Trincomalee

HOME	MAGAZINE	EVENTS	NEWS	EBOOKS	GALLERY
ARCHIVE	LINKS	CONTACT	OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIP		
PUZZLES	JOIN US / DONATE	PAST TALKS			



Welcome to the website of the Friends of HMS Trincomalee.

There is plenty of information relating to our ship's history on our [ARCHIVE](#) page which is free to download, please credit the Friends should you use this material elsewhere.

The [PUZZLES](#) page may entertain you for a while, and if you are interested in joining us please look at the [JOIN US](#) section.



The Friends of HMS Trincomalee is a registered charity run by volunteers to support the preservation, exhibiting and promotion of our ship, now at the Historic Quay in Hartlepool, England. HMS Trincomalee is the oldest British Warship still afloat. Her keel was laid down at Bombay dockyard on 25th April 1816.

The society was founded in 1993 and since 2007 has been a registered charity, number 1117790. As well as having local members, we have members throughout the country, and overseas in Europe, America and India.

In December 2015, Lord de Saumarez of Guernsey, a descendant of Admiral Sir James Saumarez, became the Friends' first Patron.

**Members' benefits include three Quarterdeck magazines a year, the ability to partake in our events and to know that you are supporting the preservation and presentation of our ship, HMS Trincomalee (previously TS Foudroyant).**

A brief history of the ship from 1812 to 1986 can be downloaded via the [ARCHIVE](#) page.



## Correspondence

Dear Sir,

The article in the latest edition of Quarterdeck concerning the effects of lightning on ships prompted a few memories which you might like to use as a follow-up piece if your column inches allow.

In 1985/6 I helped crew the Golden Hinde replica (currently berthed on the Thames in London) from the Canary Islands to Acapulco via Panama and the Galapagos. We encountered lightning in both the Atlantic and the Pacific – where it was particularly severe.

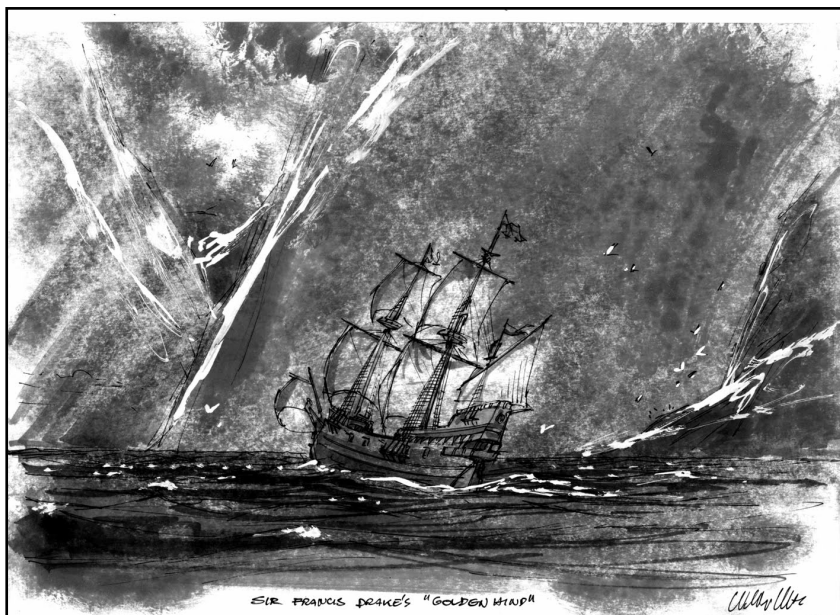
On one occasion, I was working in the main top when a fusillade of lightning struck the sea in a circle around our vessel with a noise like a large quantity of breaking china.

Naturally this concentrated the mind wonderfully and we decided to rig a conductor. If I remember correctly, our polypropylene shrouds had wire cores, so we streamed a length of chain from the starboard plates and ran a wire to the main shrouds, bypassing the natural fibre lanyards and wooden dead-eyes. There was plenty more lightning to come (I remember furling the foretops'l one night when this was the only form of illumination) but we sustained no damage, either to the ship or ourselves. One shipmate, however, did admit to feeling a slight jolt when standing close to – but not, I think, actually touching – the shrouds.

Of course I have no idea whether this arrangement worked ... or we were just plain lucky!

Yours faithfully

Jeremy Muldowney  
Heworth, York



*Golden Hind crossing the Magellan Straits*



*The replica "Golden Hinde" at St Mary Overie Dock, London*

## **SLOPS**

“SLOPS, (*hardes de matelots*, Fr.) a name given to all species of wearing apparel, bedding, &c. which are supplied to his Majesty's ships in commission, by the naval store-keeper, for the out fit of seamen.

The captain or commander of a ship, upon her being fitted for sea, or at any time of her being in want of slops or bedding, is to make timely application to the store-keeper at the port where the ship is, for such quantities of slop-clothing as will complete the store, agreeable to the establishment of the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 1799; and also such bedding as may be needful for the use of the ship's company, and to get the same on board before he proceeds to sea, to prevent, as much as possible, the purchase of slops or bedding abroad, or the ship's company suffering for want of them.

This plan has been very beneficial to the seamen, as well as a great saving to government, as pursers formerly had it in their power to make purchases sometimes unnecessarily for private emolument. The only inconvenience complained of by the purser is, the want of store-room, as the place allotted by the Navy Board for the slop-room, has never been enlarged since the commencement of providing these comforts for the crew, and its dimensions are agreeable to the rate or class of the ship, and does not contain any thing like the proportion ordered by the above regulation of the slop-clothes to be received on board; particularly when destined for foreign service; consequently, they are obliged to be placed in other parts of the ship, where they are less secure, and more liable to be injured by damps, and exposed to depredators.

Seamen coming on board, and being destitute of necessaries, may be fitted out with slops so far as two months pay in advance will allow, and every month after that period is elapsed, they may be furnished to the amount of seven shillings to the end of the voyage, should they be in want.

Slops are to be issued out publicly; and as the captain is not to suffer those to be supplied who are not really in want, so he is to oblige those who are ragged, or want bedding, to receive such necessaries as they want, not exceeding the limits aforesaid.

The captain is to keep a slop-book, according to the form prescribed, and, before the payment of the ship, or on his removal, to send the same to the Navy Board, signed by himself, the senior lieutenant, master, and purser.

On the discharge of a man by ticket, the value of the clothes he has been

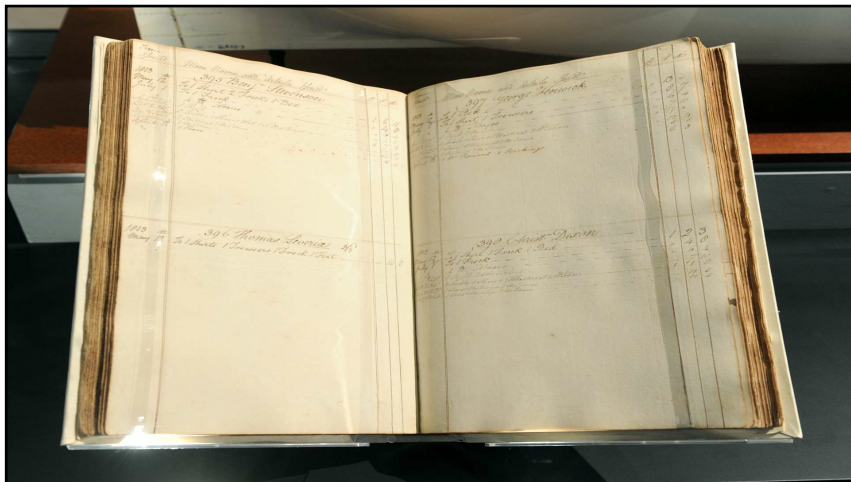
supplied with, must be noted upon the same in words at length.

If necessity requires the buying of clothes in foreign parts, the captain must procure them of the kind used in the navy, and at as moderate a rate as possible: he must also, by the first conveyance, send an invoice of the same to the Navy Board. But where there is a store-keeper, neither the captain, nor commander, nor any other person whatever, except the store-keeper, is to purchase or contract for slops or bedding. The purser is to have the charge of the slop-clothes and bedding, for the faithful discharge of which trust he shall enter into bond to the Navy Board on taking up his warrant; and for his care and pains in issuing the same, and keeping the accounts thereof, he shall at the final settlement of this account be paid one shilling in the pound on the amount of the slop-clothes issued by him, except those issued to supernumeraries, for victuals only, discharged to other ships, and those which shall appear to have been purchased by the commander of the said ship.

When a seaman dies on board, his clothes, &c. may be sold by auction, and the produce charged against the buyers on the muster and pay-books; a particular account of the same must also be kept on the slop-book.

The purser is to be allowed one shilling in the pound for his trouble, who is also to give the executors, &c. of the deceased, a particular account of the clothes sold, and to whom.

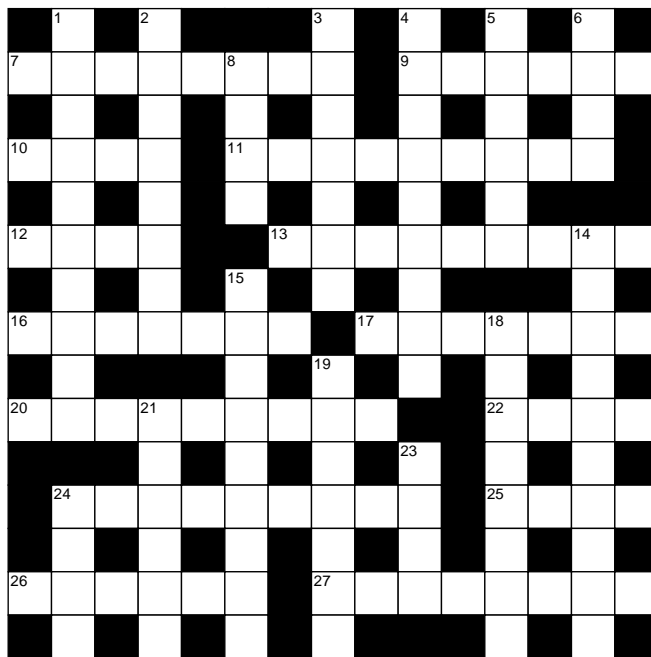
Seamen are not permitted to bid for the clothes of the deceased officers, that are above their wear, nor to bid for effects above their real value, nor purchase more than their wages can answer, agreeable to allowance.



*Slop-book from 1803*

# Mess Deck Crossword

Summer 2022 - Cryptic



HDT

## ACROSS

- 7 Step down from acid beat (8)
- 9 The said clergyman's gun (6)
- 10 Port for trade (4)
- 11 Large lies about art display (9)
- 12 Stop about right in Tiverton (4)
- 13 Company I manage for a selfish person (9)
- 16 Lighters found at Arbroath (7)
- 17 Reveals peace keepers' lists (7)
- 20 Den is rude about bottom (9)
- 22 A net gain at sea (4)
- 24 An escalator may be good for the soul (9)
- 25 One in eight may catch one (4)
- 26 Smaller ship caught in a sidelong glance (6)
- 27 Darn male becomes senior citizen (8)

## DOWN

- 1 Sailors start lashing in a beam seen slipping (10)
- 2 Invoice pirate captain for gardening tool (8)
- 3 In the main people find them a steadying influence (3,4)
- 4 Sing about the best in loud voice (8)
- 5 A standard bridge adversaries put name to (6)
- 6 Plant doctor on board ship (4)
- 8 Ship featured in extract from retrospective programme (4)
- 14 Singularly one down (10)
- 15 Go through flames, shooting on both sides (9)
- 18 They lead in the forces if ordered (8)
- 19 A mad girl, not good, bashed officer (7)
- 21 Join up, strangely silent (6)
- 23 Not quietly called elderly (4)
- 24 Abused sailor lost second hand (4)



*In May of this year Malcolm Cook took these photographs of some of the many buckets on HMS Trincomalee to cope with the rain at that time*





*"Bellydance Convivial" Summer 2014, photograph by Christopher Armstrong*



*Sea-Rangers conducting a singalong in the presence of HRH Princess Margaret  
on board TS Foudroyant 19<sup>th</sup> May 1950*