

# HMS OPOSSUM ASSOCIATION



**NEWSLETTER CHRISTMAS 2007**

**1945 – 1958**

**Welcome, a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year to all our readers.**

Good to hear from shipmates, Dave Landeg (now moved from New Zealand to the Gold coast of Australia) Charles Parker (our new website master), W Spike Hughes, Bill Thomas, Ron and Kathie Hare, Tom Tolson, Peter Shore, Bill Davis, Ron Blundy, John Owen, Sam Short, Keith Merrick, Roy Cope and Dick Jay

Chairman Tom Tolson and I have received letters from Beryl Phillips thanking HMS Opossum Association for the smartness and efficiency of our Standard Bearer Sam Edgar who won over many at her husbands funeral in June of our shipmate Ken Phillips. Well done Sam. Ken our member for Burton-on-Trent attended many reunions and will be sadly missed.

Also many will be saddened to read in our Roll of Honour of our founder Harry Catterson whose funeral in July at Middlesborough was attended by Standard Bearer Sam Edgar, former Chairman Stan Oldfield Tom Tolson, Charles Parker, and me; Roy Cope would have attended but for some hiccup in arrangements at Middlesborough bus station. Harry ran the Association from its inception in 1994 until 2001 we thank him for all his hard work and wish him a safe anchorage.

This issue contains:- Chairman's comments, statement of accounts, Roll of Honour, a terrible commission - HMS Terrible 1899-1902, further reflexions from the diary of Bill Thomas, shipmates humour, a personal profile of Charles Parker and his mariners tale, an ambition realized when Dick Jay took to the skies, bringing home HMS Whimbrel, a Black Swan class frigate transferred to the Egyptian navy in 1949 and the appeal for sailors of other Black Swan class ships to help with photographs, details of fittings and equipment etc, and lastly an interesting photograph of "A" guns crew and some details from Bill Davis.

Bookings are well underway, over 40 so far, for our next reunion in 2008 during the weekend 16th-19th May at the Lindum Hotel, Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire FY8 1LZ, organised by our Chairman Tom Tolson. The hotel can be contacted on Telephone 01253-721534/722516, Fax 01253-721364.

During October Charles Parker came to visit me before taking away all past Newsletters for possible inclusion on our website, he had brought along his lap top to show me the progress made so far. However, I was disappointed to see when it came to the list of Officers and Ships Company of my commission (1954-56) this only amounted to a dozen names. Within a few days I had collected 126 names with ranks/rates, first names where possible, along with their mess numbers. The website is our window to show any

interested party, naval or otherwise, who might be searching for a father/grandfather, relative who once served on board HMS Opossum.

### **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT**

I was disappointed and disgusted to read the scurrilous and defamatory remarks about the demise of our founder member Harry Catterson. For those of you who do not have access to the Opossum web site, I have no intention of repeating the remarks so just consider yourselves fortunate. Nevertheless Harry had a good send off and I must once again congratulate and thank Sam Edgar for his immaculate performance with the Opossum standard. The photograph of the guard of honour includes myself, Eddie Summerfold, Sam Edgar, Stan Oldfield (in his new shiny shoes) and Charles Parker. I have received confirmation of bookings for next year's reunion at the Lindum Hotel. They number 43 which means that some of you are dragging your feet, so "Come on Down" and lets have a bumper turn out. Finally it is with regret that I have to inform you our latest Associate member, Pat has crossed the bar. I know she was looking forward to accompanying Tom Quirk once again after enjoying the Trecarn reunion.

### **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

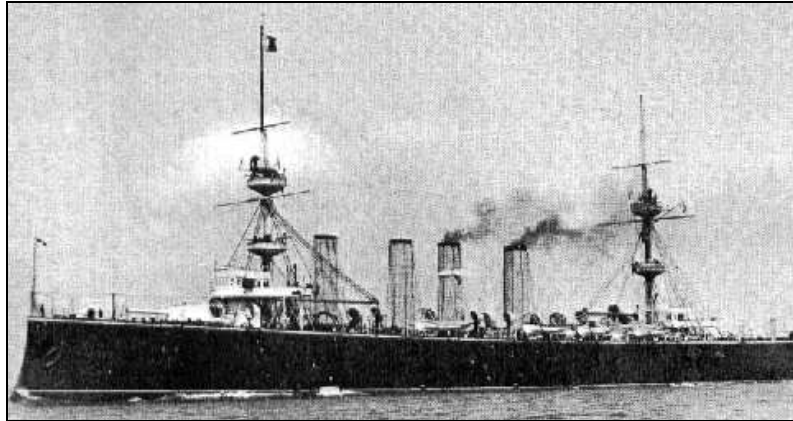
<b>Credit</b>	<b>£1,532.95</b>
<b>Debit</b>	<b>£ 365.01</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>£1,167.94</b>

### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

John C Cartwright	John Earley Willmot	Ronald Bradley
Albert Corless	Les Wood	Harry (Scous) Barlow
Bob Gray	David Jarvis	Ken Harris
John Williams	George Scott	Harry Roach
Reg Parker	Pat Norman	Fred Thornton
Gordon Fletcher	Ivan C Haskell	Fred (Mick) Bodel
George H Richards	Fred King	John Davison
George Curry	Sid Pemberton	Stephen Hart
George Brown	Cliff Harthill	Jack Marshall
Arthur Pope	Stewart Porter	Dick (Ginger) Bird
Jackie Scholes	Les Dimmock	John Bray
Harry Wollams	Pete Maddox	John Fraser
Doug Goulding	John Hardman	Cyril Mason
Bill Bolton	Mike Swayne	Ken Philips
Harry Catterson		

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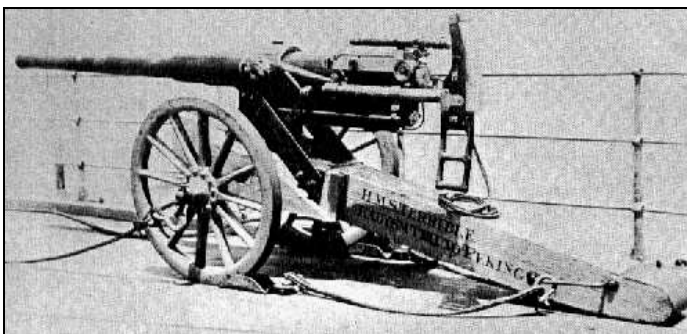
## A TERRIBLE COMMISSION



**HMS Terrible (1898-1902)**

Here is a brief story of HMS Terrible's first commission that lasted three and half years 1899-1902. Terrible was a brand new ship the last of a pair (the other being HMS Powerful) of 14,200 tons 538 feet long a beam of 71 feet, her engines could develop 25,000 hp. and had an armament consisting of two 9.2inch guns, twelve 6inch, a few 4.7inch and eighteen 12 pounders as well as eight Maxim machine guns.

She was under the command of Captain Percy Scott (the father of long range naval gunnery) An officer of small stature at 5ft. 2in. who ran a taut ship, never sparing himself what ever the job the ship had to do fighting, ceremonial, work or play he demanded and got maximum effort. Through his officers, Chiefs and Petty officers within a short time they had an efficient ships company ready to take on any duty. The company consisted of nearly 850 officers and men, now plus an extra 250 supernumery ratings. (How all these were accommodated is best left to the imagination)



**12 pounder on Cape cartwheels**



**Captain Scott**

She was destined for the China station but around this time the Boer War had broken out therefore Terrible was dispatched to South Africa where several thousand British troops were ashore. They had few artillery pieces and certainly none of as a large calibre as their Boer opponents - step forward Captain Scott.



#### **4.7inch gun mounted outside Ladysmith**

On the way South together with his Commander and gunnery officer, he held a meeting of his Armourers and Shipwrights explaining the army's lack of heavy artillery and that they could make little progress ashore without the Navy's help. Scott showed his artisans rough plans to dismantle some of the ships guns from 12 pounders up to the four-point-sevens make timber gun platforms and these together with requisitioned carts would make ammunition limbers to be hauled into action by teams of the Terrible's bluejackets. He estimated that this would employ about half the ships company over 500 men.

When the ship eventually arrived at Simonstown South Africa Scott found Cape wagon wheels that could be fitted to the gun platforms and make them mobile.

During the next few months several hundred Terrible's and their guns helped defend Kimberly and Ladysmith until they could be relieved. By this time the British Army had established a superiority and Terrible could re-ship her guns and resume her sailing orders to proceed to the China station. She arrived at Hong Kong May 31st 1900, a time when the Boxer rebellion was under way on the mainland, almost a repeat of the South African situation. The main difference she would join more British warships of various sizes but the Royal Navy was not alone for there were navies from Germany, the United States, Austria, Japan and Russia, amounting to 40 man-of-war; as well as army units, countries with interests in China and diplomats and their families besieged at their legations in Peking (Beijing) A multi-national relief column was already on their way. Terrible brought her ships guns ready for land warfare and a battalion of Royal Welch fusiliers. The ship again landed her guns and did good work keeping down the Boxers rifle and artillery fire, often under difficult conditions the heat of day and cold of sleeping out at night, a want of good drinking water always with insufficient rest before moving on again. The Peking legations were eventually relieved after two and a half months of fierce fighting. By September all Terrible's guns had been returned to the ship and re-fitted. After all this excitement the remainder of her commission was spent in recovery, being somewhat of an anti-climax.

#### **Cringe worthy comments from TV and radio**

Horse racing commentator Ted Walsh said:-

"This is really a lovely horse, I once rode her mother."

Willie Carson was telling Claire Balding how jockeys prepare for a big race. "They usually have four or five dreams a night about coming from different positions."

**MONEY:** - It's my wife who makes our budget work – the secret is that we go without a lot of things I don't need.

Ladies and gentlemen a fifty pound note has been found in the theatre. Will the person who lost it Please form a queue at the stage door.

Money can't buy you love, but it certainly puts you in a better bargaining position.

## Further reflections of BILL THOMAS Archdeacon Emeritus

My first bit of sea-time was on the voyage from Tilbury to Port Said in the trooper Dunera, enroute to join the cruiser Belfast at Singapore. On board were about 1,000 soldiers (pongoes if I remember rightly), 80 airmen and 100 matelots; mostly young lads like myself. During the very first days there was almost a mutiny. The sailors discovered they had signed-up for four meals a day, whereas the Army and Air Force had only three. There was more discontent than can be imagined, eventually the ship changed its catering arrangements to navy standards. All seemed well, but not quite the Navy demanded its Tot which the other Services didn't enjoy. Since the ship did not carry a supply of spirits it was decided that all Servicemen would be issued daily with a small bottle of beer. Here my trouble began! Our mess of about a dozen included a Glaswegian who would buy all the beer from the members, except mine. He was such a nasty man and got so drunk every afternoon that I simply refused to comply with his demands. The result he made my life a misery. When we eventually arrived at Port Said I went ashore with a mate and had a look around (Is Simon Artz still in business?) On the way back we met this Glaswegian. He was roaring drunk and had bought a dagger as a souvenir. Seeing me he grabbed me by the throat and held this dagger to my neck threatening to stab me there and then, I was terrified. It was the first time I had met anybody who was blind drunk I did not know how to cope and the first time I realized that some people were cruel and vicious. His mates and my friends calmed him down, rescued and my dignity restored. Another lesson in life. I don't remember what happen to Jock, but I do remember that I kept my beer.

During the voyage in Dunera a group of us formed a concert party. These included a professional variety artist who did song and dance, a Jock who did a sword dance, a pongo who played the piano and me who did a magic turn. We then joined together in a few sketches about service life. We put on a show for the Lower Deck, not quite the Royal Variety Show but just as well received. The next day I was approached by the Entertainments officer who asked would I be willing to do my magic turn for the First Class passengers? I mentioned this to my fellow artists there was uproar. A meeting was called and a resolution proposed. We were a concert party, all members were equal the First Class could not cherry pick, if they wanted one of us they must take us all. Simply a collection of individuals but a vote was taken and I was in a minority of one! I went back to the Entertainments officer and apologised explaining it was a democratic decision and although I disagreed with everyone else I would abide by that decision. Three days later I discovered that he had individually approached every member of the party and I was the only one who refused to perform. The First Class passenger had their concert - but it lacked the original magic.

My first encounter with real foreigners was at Port Said. We were approaching harbour early in the morning when we passed through a flotilla of fishing boats. The men onboard were waving. At lease I thought they were, but soon realized that they were shaking their fists and cursing us. I was shaken. I thought that having got over the War when we had saved Egypt from the Nazis we would be loved. Still I thought they are foreigners and foreigners have funny ways.

A year later Opossum made its epic voyage up the Yellow River to Canton. (It was a river trip rather than a voyage, but we were the largest vessel ever to go so far upstream.) The visit itself was memorable. It began when a Chinese Admiral came on board to inspect our Guard of Honour. As he strutted along the ranks his sword fell off. When the Guard presented arms they tore the Quarterdeck awning to shreds. A day or two later some were taken to visit Sun Yat Sen University. On the way back we passed units of the Chinese National Army on the march. Not so much an army more a rabble - ill clad, ill disciplined, slouching along like kids on the way to school. We laughed, foreigners were funny. Two years went by the Nationalist Army was routed and China was on the way to becoming a formidable world power. I suppose that nowadays we would have

been called racist for calling foreigners funny. But they were funny. That Chinese Admiral was hilarious almost as comic as our Guard of Honour. The Royal Navy is laden with ludicrous customs and traditions which make me smile and still do. Such laughter is not ill-meant. True it is not so much fun to be laughed at so it is important for us to learn to laugh at ourselves. The world would be a lot happier place if we learned to laugh at our pomposities starting with one or two naval traditions.

As a very ordinary and inexperienced H.O. rating I was rather thrilled to be drafted to HMS Belfast almost immediately after Raleigh. She was the Flagship of the Pacific Fleet, no less. Since I was made Quarterdeck messenger I was chuffed to do such mundane things as polish the brasses and lower the Ensign (to Field Marshal Montgomery no less.) Rather less thrilling was scrubbing the Admiral's ladder. This was done every morning as a matter of course. That was no sweat. The trouble was when we went to sea to ride out a typhoon. The ladder was raised and lashed to the rails but as the storm subsided it was lowered to the horizontal (like a domestic stepladder laid on the floor). O/Sea Thomas was ordered to tie a line to himself, secure it to the rail and climb over and scrub the ladder. It was probably the most frightening experience of my life to date. The sea was running high. One moment the oggin was in my face the next forty feet below. Add a touch of seasickness and you get the gist. I survived but only at the cost of several scrubbing brushes for each typhoon. Years later I met a retired Commander who told me he had been a Midshipman in Gambia which had put to sea with us on one occasion. He sent me a copy of what he said was his log which describes Gambia steaming through a shoal of scrubbing brushes as she approached Hong Kong. Sometime ago I visited Belfast moored in the Thames. The brasses are still there, but a bit dull. The flagstaff is still there too, but the decks are filthy and as for the gangways, I don't suppose the new owners can afford scrubbers, let alone Ordinary seamen who would risk their lives for a stepladder.

### **VERDICTS OF U.S.A. OUTLANDISH LAWSUITS**

An Oklahoma woman purchased a Winnebago motor home. On the freeway she set the cruise control to 70 mph and went in the back to make herself a sandwich. Not surprisingly the motor home turned over and crashed. She sued Winnabago for not putting in their drivers manual that she couldn't leave the drivers seat while the cruise control was set. The jury awarded her \$1,750 plus a new motor home.

A lady from Delaware sued the owner of a night club because she fell from the bathroom window knocking out her two front teeth. She was trying to sneak through the ladies room to avoid paying \$3.50 cover charge. The court ordered the night club to pay her \$12,000, plus dental expenses.

### **SHIPMATES HUMOUR**

A student from Scotland's Isle of Lewis is in his first year at an English university. His mother goes to visit him in his hall of residence.

"How are you getting along with the other students," she asks.

"Terrible, they're very noisy. For instance the one on the right keeps banging his head on the wall. While on the other side she just shouts and shouts all the time."

"Why that's awful, his mother says, what do you do?"

"I just stay quiet in my room and play my pipes.

A well endowed country lass goes to market. On her way home in the dark she meets a labourer from a nearby farm, who is laden down with items bought at the market. They walk together. After about a mile or so the lass says, "You know I'm a bit frightened that you'll take advantage of me."

"What, says the labourer, I've a chicken and a new pitch fork in one hand, a wash tub in the other and I'm leading a goat, its impossible!" Well, says the young lass, you could stick the pitch fork in the ground, tie the goat to it and put the chicken under the wash tub!"

A film crew are making a documentary on a nudist beach when a man walks into the shot sporting a huge erection.

"Out of the way, out of the way, you blithering idiot," shouts the director.

The nudist explains he cannot wear a wrist watch, "I'm a sundial, he says.

"All right what time is it," asks the director.

The nudist consults his member, "Half past two," he replies.

"Correct, says the director, thinking perhaps the man is a sundial.

Some time later he sees the same man again, but without a hard-on. Got him thinks the director,

"Right what time is it now," he asks?

"Erm, erm, it's about four o'clock," says the nudist.

"Wrong your two hours slow," replies the director.

"Oh sorry, I'll just wind it up!"

A think tank has never shielded any soldier.

If you are the world kite-flying champion, there are still strings attached.

Patience is its own reward - if you can't wait long enough.

Charioty - Roman sportsman giving to a needy cause.

Seven Bribes for seven brothers - arms trade musical featuring bless your beautiful hidden sweetener.

A group of teachers go out on a pub crawl. By the end of the evening the music teacher is Brahms and Liszt, the English teacher can't pronounce her words, the woodwork teacher is hammered and the maths teacher is pi-eyed.

How many blondes does it take to make chocolate cookies? Six, one to stir the mixture and five to peel the Smarties.

What's the difference between toast and women? You can make soldiers out of toast.

What do you call a hotel full of chess experts bragging about how good they are? Chess nuts boasting by a hotel foyer.

## **OPOSSUM PERSONAL PROFILE**

### **Charles Edward Parker (Fez)**



Born Glasgow 25th February 1939

Joined Opossum June 1957

Mates :- Sam Edgar, Jim Finch, Walter (Brum) Lewis, Jan Crole

Duties :- Boiler and Engine room

Other ships :- Mounts Bay, Andrew, Adament, Crossbow

Hobbies: - Amateur radio (full licence), Computing, Photography

Bonsai tree cultivation (fifty), Melon growing as well as anything else that takes my fancy.

## A MARINER'S TALE

by Charles Parker

I joined my first ship HMS Opossum as a raw ME(2) in June 1957 after flying out to Singapore on a trooping flight, the first of many trips by air. Having completed our work-up we sailed in July for Ceylon (Sri Lanka) Where in August of that year we took part in an exercise which was to last six weeks called Jet57 based at Trincomalee. One weekend whilst anchored in Trinco with the weather being superb Engineer's storeman Jim Jones and I having discovered a small outboard engine in the store decided it would be a good day to attach it to the ships dinghy and take it for a spin.

We got approval from the Officer of the Watch and lowered the whole assembly into the oggin. Both being experienced mariners we knew what to do (well I for one must be experienced having gone from being a lad to a man one night in Singapore, well I think I did, it all went so quickly, I had got my first tattoo in Trinco surely I must be a fully fledged sailor by now. With the little engine going phut phut flat out we steered our way in amongst all the ships from various navies assembled for the exercise without a care in the world. Suddenly all was total silence our little engine had stopped. Now what, check the fuel, oops empty tank, well we were OK we could row back, oops we had forgotten the oars, each thinking the other had seen to these things. Now what to do, no engine, no oars? Suddenly it dawned on us we were drifting further and further away from Opossum all the time, being "experienced" we had gone across the harbour with the wind, not against it.

Our saviour nearby was a ship of the Pakistani Navy who having seen our plight sent the ships boats crew to carry out a rescue of two very red faced "experienced mariners." We were towed back to their ship and taken onboard. We saw what it would have been like to serve on what appeared to be an ex Royal Navy pre-war frigate. After a while we reboarded our little dinghy and were towed back across Trinco with crews from all the ships all laughing and cheering having seen us so proudly chugging by earlier being unceremoniously towed back by a foreign navy.

Of course it had to be, word had got out about our venture and everyone including the Officer of the Watch was at the guard rail awaiting our arrival on board Opossum. We hoisted the dinghy back on deck, stowed it, returned the outboard back to the stores and with very great trepidation made our way to appear before the OOD who gave us a good rollicking and said he hoped we had learned a valuable lesson, dismissed us and walked away muttering probably something like **“if those two had been at Trafalgar we'd have lost to the ruddy Frenchies”**.

The error of our ways could not have been measured as too bad as when we were taking old Opossum to Simonstown for her sad return to the UK, we, on 2nd December 1957, crossed the line and neither of us were summoned to appear before Neptune when he came on board the previous evening to request the pleasure of various miscreants from the past six months to present themselves for trial next day. As an act of penance and to salve my conscience I did volunteer to go through the whole ceremony, God knows what the doctor gave us to drink it was horrible.

Now fifty years later almost to the day I look back with great fondness at my memories of the event and have to say **I DID** learn from it.



A farmer once called his cow Zepher, she seemed such an amiable hepher,  
But when he drew near, she bit off his ear, which made him considerably depher.

The fat farmhand was walking along with a duck in his arms when he passed a stranger.  
“What are you doing with pig?” said the stranger. “It isn’t a pig” replied the farmhand “It’s a duck”  
And the stranger said “I was talking to the duck!”  
He’s bought a farm 10 miles long and 3 inches wide. He’s planning to grow spaghetti!

## **AN AMBITION REALISED**

**By Dick Jay**



Like many Dick Jay was fascinated watching biplanes performing aerobatics. Fifty-five years later he realized his dream when for his retirement/birthday in August 1991 his son and daughter-in-law paid for a flying lesson. This took place at Good wood airfield in Surrey

### **Dick Jay at the controls**

"After a pre-flight briefing we went out to the Tiger moth aircraft and within a few minutes we took off and soon after I was given control. It was a beautiful summer’s day as we flew over Chichester harbour before going to the area to perform some aerobatics of several loops, barrel rolls and stall turns, I was living my dream. Over the years I have gained more experience and I'm now trusted to do the whole trip from take off to landing.

It all started in the 1980’s, a colleague of had a son who had recently passed his pilots licence (PPL) and was able to hire a Fuji 160 aircraft from Thruxton airfield near the motor racing track. I was invited to go flying with him and had a chance to get my hands on the controls. This was the start of many trips either just flying around or an occasional flight to such places as the Isle of Wight.

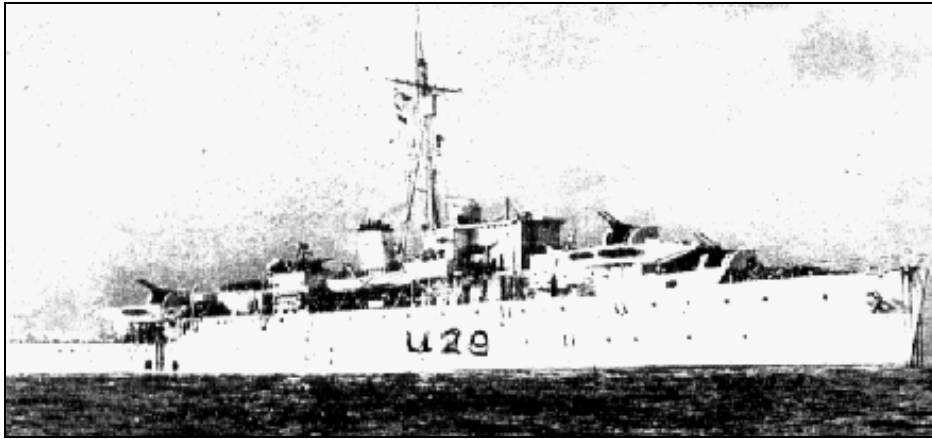
My first landing happened by a chance remark when on the way back to the airfield I jokingly said “Do you want me to land?” To my surprise he said yes, so I made my approach about 4 miles out, lining up with the runway. Applying flaps I began the gradual descent at 500 ft per minute, maintaining speed above stall speed (very important.) Arriving over the threshold I cut the throttle to idle, raising the nose to allow the plane to settle on the runway and made a very smooth landing. The feeling of exhilaration was tremendous, a real adrenalin rush for sure. I have since flown over Torbay on a windy day in a Cessna confronting a crosswind, keeping the aircraft on course was a new experience for me. This landing was a bit on the heavy side, but as they say any landing that you can walk away from is a good one.

I recommend flying to all my shipmates who want to have a thrill, some say it's even better than sex! Having prostate cancer I only have one choice. I hope to live long enough to have more flights next summer. If there are aircraft in the next world the I know I'm in heaven.

We will hear more from Biggles in our next Newsletter

I have a terrible fear of heights. Whenever I fly I ask the pilot to stay on the runway as long as possible.

### **BRINGING HOME WHIMBREL**



### **H.M.S. Whimbrel**

Shipmate Peter Shore has sent in a full page cutting regarding the Black Swan class frigate the former HMS Whimbrel transferred to the Egyptian Navy in the 1950's and for the past five years on the disposal list. An organisation aims to buy and return the ship to Britain. They are asking for any information about her or her sister ships. Members may recall in the 2006 Christmas Newsletter a photograph of this ship taken at Alexandria by our President Rear Admiral MacKenzie. Please read on:-

"Five years ago the Egyptian Navy decided to dispose of the vintage sloop ENS Tariq after a remarkable 50 years in service. The event aroused massive interest in the United Kingdom for Tariq is the former HMS Whimbrel one of the Royal Navy's Black Swan class sloops having served in the Battle of the Atlantic. Her good condition was confirmed by a preliminary survey in early 2003. What makes her really special is the extent to which she remains largely intact as she was in WW2. Still with her original machinery and armament a fine example of the legendary Black Swan class. The Egyptian government is keen to sell rather than scrapping her. Therefore, the HMS WHIMBREL (1942-49) Battle of the Atlantic Memorial project was established to look into the feasibility of returning the ship to the UK and making her the centrepiece of a naval heritage attraction commemorating the sacrifice against Hitler's U-boats. Following the survey in Alexandria, negotiations commenced with the Egyptian authorities to establish costs for structural refurbishment at an Egyptian naval base and her subsequent acquisition by the project team. Together with transportation expenses to the UK, the total costs would come to £2 million. HMS Whimbrel one of 29 modified Black Swan class sloops designed for anti-submarine and anti-aircraft convoy escort role was built by Yarrow shipyard, Glasgow and commissioned in January 1943. As well as serving in the Atlantic campaign, she was present at both Sicily and Normandy landings, transferring to the Pacific Fleet towards the end of the war in Europe to carry on the fight against Japan. HMS Whimbrel and sister ship HMS Crane represented Great Britain at the formal Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay in September 1945. Whimbrel was sold to the Egyptian Navy in 1949. The ship's proposed new berth in Liverpool is Canning Dock, a prime waterfront site next to

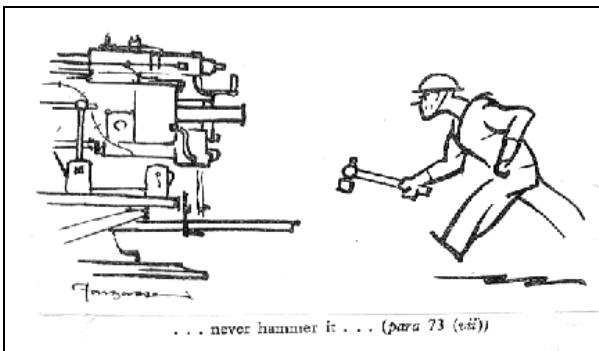
the Albert Dock complex and new Paradise Street development. The project's main aim today is to return the ship to the city by 2008, in time for her to become a key part of Liverpool's year as the European Capital of Culture. Part of the complex planning is being funded by the Liverpool City Council and Government Office of the North West under European Union objective 1 programme. Clare Beavan, the project's Head of Fund-raising, reports an increasing flow of small private donations, but says more is needed. Clare is looking for volunteer project coordinators and would like to hear from anyone interested in helping, whether with fund-raising or with practical skills, especially if they are members of the Royal Naval Association or the Association of Royal Naval Officers. The project team intend restoring Whimbrel to her 1940's appearance inside and out, where possible. While a detailed specification has now been completed, a lot of help is needed with provision of more information to supplement the existing drawings and photographs. The project team has therefore appealed for any one with knowledge of the Black Swan class, whether it's first or second hand, to come forward. Photographs of the interior from any ship of the class would be invaluable for the accurate restoration. According to the Whimbrel team snapshots of crew members on board can be helpful in providing background detail such as mess kit, engine room controls or bridge equipment. The restoration of original communications and radar equipment is expected to present some particular challenges. Information or material especially photographic of the WT, transmitting station or asdic and RDF rooms will be greatly appreciated. The task of restoration is immense. Already a lot of information and photographs relating to HMS Whimbrel wartime service has been received by the project's surveyor and archivist, Rod Pudduck the call is for more.

**Whimbrel Contacts :-** If you have knowledge of the ship or one of her sister vessels please contact Rod **Email:- rodshome @ dsl pipex.com.**

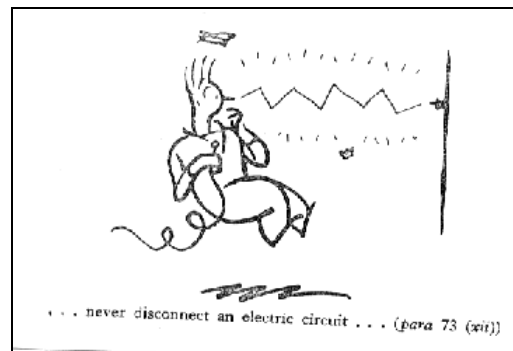
**Volunteers** may contact Clare Beavan by **Email clare @mersinet. co. uk**

**More information** can be found at the Whimbrel web site **www. hmswhimbrel. org**

### TWO NEVER'S



**Never hammer it.....**



**Never disconnect an electric circuit...**

What do you do with 365 used condoms?  
Melt them down, make a tyre and call it a Goodyear

Why do girls rub their eyes when they get up in the morning?  
Because they don't have any balls to scratch.

Why were hurricanes normally named after women?  
Because when they come they're wild and wet.  
But when they go they take your house and car with them.

We men would rather be right than reasonable.  
The way to fight a woman is with your hat – grab it and run.

### **"A" GUNS CREW 1945**



Bill Davis of Sutton-on-Sea wrote sending along this interesting photograph of his gun crew, his head and cap can just be seen, third from the left. It looks like a posed photograph - but. During a lull doing some practice firing spent loafing around, Archer (second from the right - breechworker) was asked could the percussion lever be used to fire the gun. He replied in the negative and to demonstrate he hit the lever. How wrong he was! All hell broke loose. Strippy Rea was in charge and came to find the culprit Archer who put on an act of innocence. Then the commissioned gunner arrived ordered the breech to be opened and saw the evidence contradicting Archer's excuse and somehow lost the shell case over the side before "Jimmy" came on the scene. He wonders if any of the "45" ships company remembers the incident?

Bill had volunteered in the summer of 1944 from his home in North Yorkshire. After training at Royal Arthur (Skegness) and Glendower (Pwtheli) along with many other new recruits he was sent to south London to clear up bomb damage. The 11th December 1944 is remembered when a V2 rocket landed on Woolworth's store at New Cross. All ratings had gloves and a clothes basket provided to rummage in the rubble, very tiring and grisly work. Eventually on VE Day, 8th May, a draft chit came along to proceed to Glasgow and join the newly built HMS Opossum.

### **More funnies.**

In a convent hospital the Mother Superior has gathered her flock saying "We have two cases of Gonorrhoea" "Well" said one of the novices "I hope they are better than the two cases of Chardonnay we had last month!"

I don't go to church much; I'm a Seventh Day Absentist.

My local church organises bingo games. The priest calls out the numbers in Latin so the atheists can't win.

I've joined a new church that is very liberal. They've whittled it down to five commandments and five suggestions.

The aircraft hit a bad patch of severe turbulence with passengers holding on tight as the plane rocked and rolled through the night. A little old lady turned to the minister behind. "You're a man of God, can't you do something about this?" "Sorry, I can't, I'm sales not management!"  
Our church welcomes all denominations – fives, tens, twenties.

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