

# THE COMMUNICATOR



VOL. 3  
Nº 3

CHRISTMAS  
1949



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# THE COMMUNICATOR

*The Magazine of the Communications Branch, Royal Navy*

CHRISTMAS 1949

■ VOL. 3. NO. 3. ■

ONE SHILLING &amp; THREEPENCE

## CONTENTS

	page		page
CAPTAIN SWALLOW .. ..	104	BRING ME MY BOW .. ..	124
CAPTAIN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE .. ..	105	ROUND THE HOME ESTABLISHMENTS .. ..	125
AUSTERITY AND THE GOSPEL .. ..	105	ROUND THE HOME FLEET .. ..	132
A REGATTA WIRELESS TOTALISATOR .. ..	106	WESTERN UNION .. ..	134
ROUND THE FOREIGN STATIONS .. ..	108	LET'S TALK SHOP .. ..	136
THE GEORGE INN, PORTSDOWN .. ..	114	RADIO INDUSTRY NOTES .. ..	138
KNOCKER WHITE CARTOON .. ..	120	GOING THE ROUNDS IN "MERCURY" .. ..	140
ADVANCEMENT NOTES .. ..	121	NAVAL HISTORY CROSSWORD .. ..	148
BOOK REVIEWS .. ..	122	COMMUNICATIONS GAZETTE .. ..	150
KNOCKER AND THE STARS .. ..	123	CURRENT COURSES IN "MERCURY" .. ..	156

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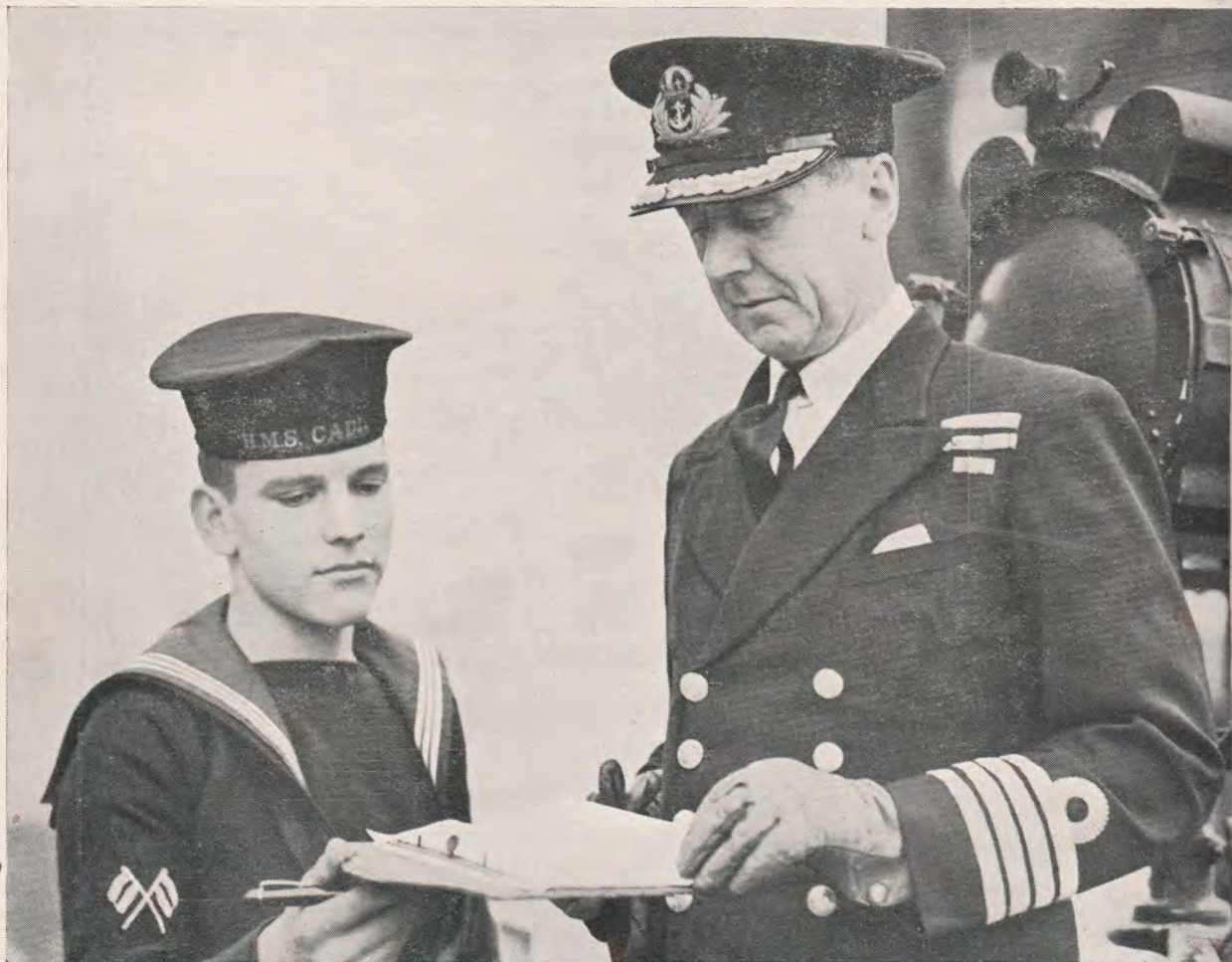
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*Photograph Daily Graphic*

*In the photograph Signal Boy P. W. Gage is handing a signal to Captain Swallow, then Captain (D), 4th D.F.*

### THE DIRECTOR OF SIGNAL DIVISION, ADMIRALTY. CAPTAIN R. G. SWALLOW, ROYAL NAVY.

Qualified in Signals, 1929.

Flag Lieutenant and Signal Officer to  
R.A. 3rd B.S., H.M.S. *Emperor of  
India*, 1930.

Signal Officer, 4th D.F., H.M.S. *Mackay*,  
1930-32.

Experimental Department, H.M. Signal  
School, 1932-34.

H.M.S. *Rodney* (General Service), 1934-35.  
W.I., H.M. Signal School, 1935-37.

Flag Lieutenant and Squadron Signal  
Officer to R.A., Aircraft Carriers, H.M.  
Ships *Courageous* and *Ark Royal*, 1937-39.  
W.I., H.M. Signal School, 1939.

Promoted Commander, December 1939.

Staff Signal Officer to C-in-C., Ports-  
mouth, 1939-41.

Commander (A), Admiralty Signal and  
Radar Establishment, 1941-42.

Squadron Signal Officer to R.A., Aircraft  
Carriers, H.M.S. *Victorious*, 1942.

Commander, H.M.S. *Berwick*, 1943-44.

Admiralty Radio Equipment Department,  
planning Operation *Neptune*, 1944.

Promoted Captain, June 1945.

Deputy Director Radio Equipment Depart-  
ment, Admiralty, 1945-46.

Deputy Director Naval Electrical Depart-  
ment, Admiralty, 1946-47.

Captain (D), 4th D.F., H.M.S. *Agincourt*,  
1948-49.

Director of Signal Division, Admiralty,  
1949.

CAPTAIN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

**Happy Christmas and Best Wishes  
for the New Year to you all**

*Harry Purdie.*

**AUSTERITY AND THE GOSPEL**

The recent cuts in national expenditure have brought home to us all more clearly than perhaps ever before the truth of our Lord's assertion that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesses. It is surprising how quickly human nature can adapt itself to material loss. Times change and we change with them, the Latin poet observes, and this is as true now as it was in the time of the Cæsars.

There has been no time in our national history when it was more necessary to look facts and figures squarely in the face than today. The big credit balances and the vast accumulated wealth of the Empire have been dissipated by two major wars within four decades, and the margin of safety is dangerously narrow. Let us face it that the slippered ease of the Victorian age has vanished for ever, to be replaced by the prospect of hob-nailed austerity.

Is this, however, the unmitigated tragedy that many would have us imagine? Need we be any less happy or contented because materially we are not so well off today as our forefathers were? Those possessed of hedonistic tendencies will say "Yes," but the verdict of history is against them. This does not mean that we are to have recourse to a sombre stoicism which blindly accepts hardship and poverty as an inevitable law, and accordingly seeks to steel itself against these conditions with helpless resignation.

It is to the ethics of practical Christianity that we must look for a solution of the problems which face us to-day. We are told by St. John "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son." It is hardly necessary to point out that this advice could not have been offered to a race of super-men inhabiting a spiritually perfect universe where problems such as those which confront us simply would not exist. This advice, rather, and the promise it contains, was intended to reach the human mind in a universe of its own making, which is far from perfect and is beset by many problems. It indicates that the very necessity for overcoming is, in fact, the cradle of our salvation;

in which all those qualities essential to final victory are tenderly reaped and nourished from birth to maturity by God Himself. The only design of evil—if, indeed, evil has any design—is to evoke those very qualities which bring about its own destruction.

If anyone should be inclined to doubt the truth of this observation, let him cast his mind back to the recent war, when one devilish device after another merely resulted in calling forth the means of its own destruction or neutralisation. The magnetic mine evoked the degaussing band and this process continued throughout the whole series of land, sea and air attacks. There was an answer to every secret weapon. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" the prophet Isaiah told Israel, and no force of evil can overcome the ultimate triumph of good, that is provided we accept it, believe in it and demonstrate our practical faith in it.

Today the weapons directed against us are not primarily naval, military and aerial, but social, economic and financial. Are we threatened with industrial unrest by Communist-inspired propaganda? If so, leaders will appear, as they always do in time of need, who will be able to heal the breach and overcome bitterness and hatred with the sweetness of justice and love. Are we suffering from chronic maladjustment of the world's goods? Then we may confidently look for voluntary efforts on the part of the more fortunate nations with a view to their making a fairer and more even distribution of their wealth. Is not this what the United States in particular have been doing ever since the expiry of Lend-Lease? Are those who would dominate the world from selfish motives seeking to overthrow Christianity and substitute the tyranny of material power? Already signs are not wanting to show that they are beginning to crumble from within?

In fine, we have no cause for complaint or anxiety if we believe in the overruling providence of God. St. Paul realised this and passed his experience on to the Philippians: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therein to rest content."

PADRE.



## A REGATTA WIRELESS TOTALISATOR

When the South Atlantic Squadron joined up with units of the South African Naval Forces for the yearly exercise and regatta period at Saldanha Bay in August, it was decided to run a wireless tote on the pulling events. Many Communicators will remember the old pre-war W/T tote which helped to keep the Fleet regatta conscious in Navarin Bay; others will have read the article in THE COMMUNICATOR's sister magazine, *N.D. Bulletin*, recently, which gave the organisation for a voice tote. For the South Atlantic Squadron's Saldanha Bay regatta, however, the staff required by the old W/T tote and the more modern voice tote was a little too much for the frigates in company, and a streamlined simplex tote complan was introduced. Its greatest recommendation is that it worked, and worked well. With the various fleet and squadron regattas of 1950 already looming up, Communicators may find the following details of the South Atlantic Squadron's wireless tote of some use in planning their own organisations.

Five ships took part in the regatta and the only technical tote requirement was that each ship should have the keying and reception of one frequency (the tote wave) at the tote table. In *Nigeria*, the controlling ship, the set used was a battery-operated boxed TCS. The choice of key as opposed to voice as the medium of emission was made because of the difficulty of remote controlling V.H.F. voice sets from the vicinity of the tote table, and because it was considered that circuit discipline could be tighter, logging more accurate and the probability of transmission errors reduced by using key. In this connection, all ships were enjoined to employ experienced operators on circuit, using Normal Procedure (Abbreviated Method) with high-speed hand operating. To aid control, and to shorten the length of the tote sales and dividend signals, local call-signs and operating signals were introduced.

### CALL-SIGNS

H.M.S. <i>Nigeria</i>	..	..	NG (Controlling)
H.M.S. <i>Actaeon</i>	..	..	AC
H.M.S. <i>Nereide</i>	..	..	ND
H.M.S.A.S. <i>Good Hope</i>	..	..	GP
H.M.S.A.S. <i>Transvaal</i>	..	..	TL

Collective Call .. .. REG

### OPERATING SIGNALS

BNR: I have . . . boats taking part in race No. indicated.

OTR: Open tote on Race No. . . . consisting of the following entries . . .

CTR: Close tote on Race No. . . . and report tickets sold per boat and total sales.

TSR: Tickets sold per boat on Race No. . . . are . . . Total sales . . .

ODDS: Forecast of dividends for Race No. . . . are . . .

PAY: Winner of Race No. . . . was Boat No. . . . Pay a dividend of . . . units.

### IDENTITY OF RACES AND BOATS

The races were, of course, numbered consecutively from number one, and the boats were identified by a ship's letter painted on the bow. Where a ship entered two boats, the individual boats were identified by the addition of the suffixes "A" and "B," as follows: H.M.S. *Nigeria*: Boat identity "N" (or "NA" and "NB").

H.M.S. *Actaeon*: Boat identity "A" (or "AA" and "AB").

H.M.S. *Nereide*: Boat identity "E" (or "EA" and "EB").

H.M.S.A.S. *Good Hope*: Boat identity "G" (or "GA" and "GB").

H.M.S.A.S. *Transvaal*: Boat identity "T" (or "TA" and "TB").

All the above information was made known to ships well in advance of regatta day and numerous tote wave exercises were carried out, until the total circuit time required for the passing of a full cycle of tote sales and dividend signals for one race was reduced to something of the order of six minutes. As the actual time from the "OTR" signal to the "PAY" signal was normally about thirty minutes, a sufficient reserve of circuit time was available if required for checks, repetitions, etc. On regatta day ships were tuned about one hour before the first race, and the cycle of signals for that race commenced thirty minutes before the start. In the examples following, a cycle of signals for a hypothetical Race No. 5 is given exactly as transmitted and answered, and bearing in mind that the operators were absolutely familiar with the call-signs, operating signals and boat identities involved, the reader may assess for himself or herself the value of the writer's claim for the simplicity of this tote complan.

### COLLECTING THE ENTRIES

Before opening the tote on any race it was necessary for each ship to signal to the controlling ship the number of boats she was entering, so that punters would not be hampered by last-minute scratchings, entries, etc. *Nigeria* therefore called for reports by "BNR" signal, shortly after the "Pay" signal covering the previous race.

REG v NG INT BNR5 k (How many boats in Race No. 5?)

v AC BNR5 — 1 k (*Actaeon* 1 boat)

v ND BNR5 — 1 k (*Nereide* 1 boat)

v GP BNR5 — 1 k (*Good Hope* 1 boat)

v TL BNR5 — 1 k (*Transvaal* 1 boat)

REG v NG R — BNR5 — 2 + (*Nigeria* 2 boats)



## OPENING THE TOTE

Having collected the entries, *Nigeria* opened the tote on that race, usually about twenty minutes before the start. As soon as this "OTR" signal had been passed, the sale of tickets commenced in all ships, the tickets being so numbered and marked that the sales per boat and the total sales at any time could be computed quickly and simply.

REG v NG OTR5 — NA — NB — A — E — G — T k

(Open the tote on the fifth race consisting of two entries from *Nigeria* and one entry each from the other ships.)

v AC R +  
v NDR +  
v GP R +  
v TL R +

## CLOSING THE TOTE

The tote was closed on any race by the "CTR" signal, made as the race started, and ships then stopped selling and passed in their "TSR" reports. These reports were entered on a "pro forma" in the controlling ship and the dividend for each possible winner worked out by the tote calculator.

REG v NG CTR5 k

v AC R +  
v ND R +  
v GP R +  
v TL R +

NG v AC TSR5 — NA10 — NB5 — A48 — E6 —  
G4 — T8 — 81 k

v NG R +

NG v ND TSR5 — NA4 — NB6 — A3 — E36 —  
G Nil — T1 — 50 k

v NG R +

NG v GP TSR5 — NA10 — NB1 — A5 — E3 —  
G28 — T2 — 49 k

v NG R +

NG v TL TSR5 — NA4 — NB3 — A12 — E3 —  
G7 — T37 — 66 k

v NG R +

REG v NG TSR5 — NA128 — NB64 — A12 — E8  
— G Nil — T Nil — 212 +

## THE DIVIDEND FORECAST

As the "TSR" reports were received in *Nigeria* they were entered in a "pro forma" and the dividends subsequently worked out and promulgated.

Normally, the dividends were established to the nearest whole unit below and the decimal points accrued to the tote fund for the provision of regatta prizes. Where the dividends were low, however, the dividend was established to the nearest whole unit above or below. These dividends were signalled to ships in company by the "ODDS" signal.

REG v NG ODDS5 — NA3 — NB5 — A5 — E8 —  
G11 — T9 k

v AC R +  
v ND R +  
v GP R +  
v TL R +

## PAYING OUT

When the race was over, and the judge's decision made known, the "PAY" signal was made. Assuming that the fifth race was won by *Actaeon*, the signal to pay would have been as follows:

REG v NG PAY5 — A — 5 k

v AC R +  
v ND R +  
v GP R +  
v TL R +

The whole cycle then began again.

The tote was a great success, and was kept very busy. Quite a large sum was collected from the odd decimal points of dividends and it needed only a minor grant from the welfare committees of the various ships taking part to raise the total amount to a sum sufficient to provide each thwart and the coxswains of winning crews with the traditional silver oars.

Ship	Sales Record. Race No. 5										
	NA	NB	AA	AB	EA	EB	GA	GB	TA	TB	Total
<i>Nigeria</i> .. ..	128	64	12	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	212
<i>Actaeon</i> .. ..	10	5	48	—	6	—	4	—	8	—	81
<i>Nereide</i> .. ..	4	6	3	—	36	—	—	—	1	—	50
<i>Good Hope</i> .. ..	10	1	5	—	3	—	28	—	2	—	49
<i>Transvaal</i> .. ..	4	3	12	—	3	—	7	—	37	—	66
Totals.. ..	156	156	79	80	56	—	39	—	49	—	458
Dividends .. ..	3	5	5	—	8	—	11	—	9	—	—

# ROUND THE FOREIGN STATIONS

## MEDITERRANEAN

Recent changes in the Communication staff at Malta include the departure of Lt. Durnford, 2/O. Macdonald, C.Y.S. Dickinson, P.O. Tels. Braddock, Smith and Chapman, and those two stalwarts of the hockey field, L./Tel. and L./Sig. Smith, all of whom have gone to the United Kingdom. We wish them all the best of luck in their new jobs and hope that they will not find the new reign of austerity at home too much for them after the flesh-pots (?) of Malta.

The Fleet is at present but a shadow of its pre-war self, as those who were on the station before the war are only too willing to tell us. *Vanguard* has gone home, *Triumph* to the Far East, and *Ocean*, after trooping to the Far East, has also gone home, very shortly now to be relieved in the Mediterranean by *Glory*. The Third D.F. is now an "all battle" flotilla, although not at full strength, consisting of four ships plus two on loan from the Home Fleet. *Newcastle* is off to the United Kingdom before Christmas, to be relieved by *Gambia* next near.

We welcome the 11th D.F. consisting of the three Indian Destroyers *Rajput*, *Rana* and *Ranjit*, who are working up in Malta before continuing on their way to India. Some of their Communication staffs will be well known to their fellow-Communicators in the R.N., as they have been training at Leydene. Other recent visitors have been *Duilio*, Flagship of the Italian Fleet, the United States Sixth Task Fleet, including the heavy cruiser *Des Moines* and the carrier *Leyte*, H.M.S. *Devonshire*, and finally H.M.S. *Amethyst* on her triumphal progress home. *Kenya* has just arrived to work up at Malta before going to the Far East, and the Pakistan destroyers *Tippu*, *Sultan* and *Tariq* are expected shortly to do the same.

The staff of Malta M.S.O. has recently been reduced by eleven Tels., and further cuts in complement are said to be on the way. However, by careful juggling, the further reductions will not involve any reduction of services.

The secret room roof has been covered with hollow tiles in an attempt to reduce the temperature inside during the summer. Also thermometers have been installed inside against the ceiling, which a gentleman reads from time to time, climbing carefully up his ladder to do so. This latter practice has not had any noticeable effect on the temperature, although the tiles on the roof have made a difference. Other improvements to the secret room have been the provision of desks for the two Wren officers and an electric kettle for all. It is hoped to have a suitable display of flowers in the near future.

The fixed services receiving station at Ta Zuta remains in its isolation, though without much splendour. Although far from the delights of Valetta, there is a most beautiful view (of the sea) which compensates for the disadvantages of the situation.

An added advantage, of course, might be said to be the lack of daily divisions, etc. However, the new receiving station at Zeebug is coming along. The buildings themselves are almost complete, although it will not be possible to open the station for some considerable time yet. The living quarters should be very comfortable, and the only jarring note is the galley, which, to judge from appearances, might first have cooked dinner during the Middle Ages. It is understood that electric galleys will eventually be installed.

The Fleet has done the two summer cruises since we last went to the press. The main items of Communication interest during the cruises were the visits to Navarin (for the Fleet pulling regatta in which *Liverpool's* whaler won the Fleet Communications Race), Argostoli and Aranci Bay. It is only during such visits, when the Fleet is concentrated in one anchorage, that harbour communications are fully exercised, and traffic reaches a level to keep ships' staffs on their toes. General drill and snap drills of all kinds were exercised at Argostoli and Aranci. One of the drills was to land a shore signal station manned entirely by officers (no specialists allowed), and for all traffic concerning the defence of the Fleet anchorage by minesweepers against an attack by two submarines to be passed through the station on voice circuits and by V/S. The station worked satisfactorily. On another occasion seven ships were ordered to clear a signal via Western Union channels. Paris was a little surprised, on giving "GBXZ" a "K." when seven ships attempted to clear traffic, and finally had to give up the struggle.

We feel that we have now an experienced and possibly as critical audience of senior signal officers in the Fleet as we are ever likely to see: Vice-Admiral Mountbatten (C.S. One), Captain Inglis (C.O.F.), Captain Walter (M/S Two), Captain Durlacher (D Three), Captain Bonham Carter (*Pelican*) and Cdr. Gordon-Lennox (*Surprise*).

## TALL TALES FROM THE FLEET FLAGSHIP

1. The voice operator on fleet wave who, on hearing someone shout from the bridge to the flag deck "Chop Chop," suddenly awoke and said into the microphone: "Execute to follow—chop chop . . ."

2. Another harassed voice operator, call-sign "Blanket," ordered to comply with some complicated orders, who replied: "This is Blanco. Wilkit Out."

## TAILPIECE

The Chief Yeoman of the Watch in Malta M.S.O. is not only in charge of the watch, and for a large part of the time Duty Signal Officer, but he is also a bureau of information for any and every staff officer who rings up about anything. Recently both his



telephones were out of order. Comment by a very senior member of C.-in-C.'s staff: "Have those put right at once—they are the most important phones on the island."

### S.T.C. MALTA

During the summer months there was considerable activity with our radio vans, and the Ldg. Tels. (Qualifying) on one mobile exercise spent three days on "location" at Paradise Bay.

A senior officer observed that the site used was chosen more for its swimming conditions than its radio communication possibilities: the exercise was, however, surprisingly successful. A Ldg. Sig. had to be included in the party, as it was found that none of the Tels. could cook. Fortnightly payment was made just before the party left the S.T.C., and the "Jolly Jack" Bar, about a mile away from the camp, is believed to have been well patronised.

Our new arrivals include C.Y.S. Fisher and C.P.O. Tel. Healing; their families were hot on their heels and they have now settled down, living close enough to be able to ignore the eight-thirty and sixteen-thirty boats.

Amongst departures we regret the loss of Cdr. Trechman, who has, we understand, proceeded with his oak leaves to close the dollar gap.

It has been reliably reported that C.Y.S. Cockings and C.P.O. Tel. Carter are very comfortably occupied in raising the efficiency of Wren Communicators at Leydene. Several pending departures include C.R.E. Penny, C.P.O. Tel. Terry and C.Y.S. Bicknell.

The Officer-in-Charge is also shortly leaving, and although he cannot, perhaps, look back on very successful endeavours to raise the standard of communications in the Mediterranean Fleet, there is one record that will take many commissions to beat. All the members of the Staff Office (except one who has already done his bit) have produced offspring, the latest addition being Miss Philippa Jones. The weight record is held by C.R.E. Penny, whose reproduction topped ten pounds. Mr. Jones was at the time busily engaged in Ricasoli's production of "French Leave"; for the latter performance he received high praise indeed from the local Press. Prize answer for what is *Notot*—"Not to be sent by telephone."

### MALTA SIGNAL WRENS

Since the last edition, the Malta Signal Wrens have had several "days to remember." One of the most enjoyable of these was a day at sea in H.M.S. *Euryalus*, when the Signal Wrens distinguished themselves by winning a flag hoisting competition against the Sea Cadets. Another day was spent at sea in the minesweeper H.M.S. *Sylvia*, when they witnessed a most impressive sight—the Governor's farewell review of the Fleet.

The event of the summer was the visit to Malta of H.M.S. *Amethyst*. Several of our Wrens lunched at Admiralty House with the crew, and were very

thrilled to have met L./Tel. French.

During the very hot weather swimming and sun-bathing filled all off-duty hours, but with the approach of winter we have again turned to riding and hockey. Two of our Wrens are in the W.R.N.S. hockey team, including Wren Pearson who is an ex-Portsmouth Command player.

### FAR EAST



Kranji W/T Station

### KRANJI W/T STATION

Here at Kranji we are situated in a somewhat secluded spot, but for all that we manage to occupy ourselves with a number of interesting activities.

Possibly the most popular form of entertainment is the combined socials and dances, one of which is held about once a month, sponsored by one or another of the watches. Girls are invited from the nearby Army and R.A.F. camps and there is generally a pretty large attendance. Each rating who attends is expected to contribute the sum of five dollars towards expenses. This is very cheap for an evening's entertainment in Singapore. The money is very propitiously used to buy an ample supply of beer and soft drinks with an abundance of cakes and sandwiches. Music is provided by a radiogram and everyone seems to enjoy themselves pretty thoroughly.

Some considerable time ago we were the proud

possessors of a swimming pool, but after the concrete bottom caved in it was rendered useless. The site is at present being used as a rifle range, but it is rumoured that negotiations are now in progress for the erection of a large canvas swimming pool on the same site. While a rifle range can be very entertaining, it is quite certain that the majority of the ratings on the station will welcome with open arms, the advent of a new swimming pool even though it may mean the loss of the range. At present, the only respectable swimming amenities are at H.M.S. *Terror*, which means a journey of ten miles for anyone wishing to make use of it.

Otherwise, actually on the station, we have an exceptionally good cinema, a tennis court, badminton court and a more recently acquired billiard table, which is very popular. Then there are all the usual outdoor sports, for all of which we turn out some very good teams.

With regard to work in the C.R.R., the imprisonment of the *Amethyst* in the Yangtse seemed to herald the beginning of a continuous stream of traffic. Since then, with the enlargement of the fleet out here, there has been no stopping it. With the approach of Christmas and the inevitable Christmas traffic we are anticipating an exceptionally busy time.

An outsider entering Kranji recently might easily have been given the impression that he was entering a lumber camp judging by the activities. Ex-Kranji ratings will no doubt remember the old wooden Japanese masts. These are now being chopped down to make way for the standard metal ones. It is a job requiring skilled axemanship, and it is quite an arresting sight seeing them fall to the ground. One might almost expect to hear a loud voice shouting "Timber."

It is fast becoming a battle here to establish who has the greater rights on the station, the ratings or the dogs. The canine population seems to be increasing rapidly day by day. At least half the ratings here must be the owner of a dog. It is quite embarrassing eating a meal when there is one of them gazing at you with a look of acute hunger in its eyes. You can hardly refuse it some of your food, even though you know it has just polished off someone else's meal. Let no man ever refer to dogs again as "our dumb friends." They are far from being dumb, and their favourite time for showing the fact appears to always coincide with our coming off the morning watch.

Ratings who have been at Kranji during the past two years will probably be interested to learn that Lt. Cdr. Lee has now left us to take up the post of Communications Officer aboard H.M.S. *Illustrious*. He has been succeeded by Lt. Cdr. Ridler. Also both Chief E.R.A. Berry and Chief P.O. Tel. Gasnier have returned to the United Kingdom, leaving both M.T. Chief and Regulating Chief's jobs in the hands of P.O. Tel. Dibbens. There are quite a number of us who are hoping to be back in the United Kingdom again before another number of THE COMMUNICATOR

is published, and, interesting though life may be at Kranji, most of us will be more than pleased to be back in England once more.

That concludes this article, but there will no doubt be a number of you who will find out for yourselves what Kranji is like before very long.

M. I. C.



C.S. H.Q. Hong Kong

## H.M.S. "TAMAR"

If you look on any map of the Far East, in approximate position 22 degrees 10 minutes north, 114 degrees 18 minutes east, you should find a little red spot marked "Hong Kong."

The nerve centre of this outpost of the Empire is the Combined Service Headquarters (C.S.H.Q.), a modern three-storeyed, cream-coloured building (see picture). Here the three Services have all their staff positions, and endeavour to work in harmony.

Occupying one wing of the ground floor is the Central Receiving Room (C.R.R.), with the Main Signal Office (M.S.O.) directly overhead, on the first floor. The Bridge Signal Office (B.S.O.), manned by Chinese naval signal ratings, is on the roof of the building, with an excellent view to the harbour limits.

The normal volume of signal traffic is about 500 signals per day, and is comfortably coped with. At peak periods, however, such as the "Yangtse incident," when additional waves were manned, as many as 750 signals per day were handled. This included a large proportion of Telegrams, C.S.Ns. and S.L.Ts., from the more fortunate of the crews of the ships engaged in this action to their people at home, and later, in the reverse direction.

It should be mentioned here that the normal complement of the W/T station (it has since been reduced) was insufficient, and Leading Tels. (Q) were called from their course to help out. We learned that this did not affect the final results of the examination, as no one failed to pass.

While on the subject of the Yangtse incident, we were all very pleased to hear of Tel. Jack French's award of the D.S.M. We in the C.R.R. had a personal interest, as we had a direct line on 8 mc/s ship-shore



with *Amethyst* all the time she was held prisoner at Tantu. We have nothing but the highest praise for the way French coped with the situation, assisted by his mechanic, Rutter.

The other peak period is, of course, at Christmas, when thousands of telegrams and S.L.Ts. are relayed. Hong Kong W/T is a supplementary receiving station, and is well situated for ship-shore working. The more eager operators will "QSP" ships in the Arctic, or other such fantastic distances, but we can usually find enough traffic in Area 8 alone.

The garrison are having frequency security exercises, with about two Army regiments representing rioting elements within Hong Kong and Kowloon. C.S.H.Q., of course, comes in for its share of sabotage, and various ruses are devised for entering the building. In the earlier exercises, entry was relatively simple, and many a time bomb, or some such infernal machine, was planted in the C.R.R., and other offices. The P.O.O.W. was armed with a tommy-gun (represented by a bicycle pump). More recently, we are given a chit to say "This man is to be considered armed." A more aspiring P.O. Tel., being a "native" and not able to get one of these chits, made out his own: "This rating is in possession of an atom bomb."

In the latest exercise, we are told that no elements infiltrated to within 400 yards of C.S.H.Q. If it comes to the real thing, we hope they won't get *that* close.

To sum up, however, all this keeps us on our toes, and helps along the commission. To Chatham readers in particular we would like to point out that in the coming year there will be plenty of vacancies in the station, when the majority of the W/T staff are due to be relieved. You want excitement—this is the place for it.

Here's hoping this little article will serve its purpose as an advertisement for would-be volunteers.

GEE-ZED-O.

## H.M.S. "TRIUMPH"

Since our last contribution to THE COMMUNICATOR we have exchanged the blue waters of the Mediterranean for the more sombre greeny-grey of the Far East, as many will have heard or read about in the Press.

Leaving Malta early in August, our journey was most pleasant, a welcome diversion being a stop of short duration at Port Said, where the inevitable "guille-guille" man was hired to provide an hour's wonderful entertainment which amazed and confounded even the hard-bitten East-of-Suez types as much as the chaps seeing him for the first time.

Aden next, another short stay, then off again to Colombo. (Incidentally, for those who have not been down this way for a while, the Red Sea wasn't as red as of yore; in fact, Signal Boy Barker was most disappointed about it. "Same colour as Southend," says he.)

On arrival at Colombo we found our old friend of the Med., *Mauritius*, now in the East Indies Squadron. Most of her ship's company were away at

the rest camp, so we were unable to effect any sporting programmes between the Communicators. However, the wonderful diamonds and sapphire rings, all genuine, guaranteed not to shrink, melt, or change colour, were bought with our wealth accumulated since our release from the night life of Malta. How nice to think of the exclamations of our sweeties, ma's and sisters when first they view these exquisite treasures of the Orient! Many were loath to leave this beautiful port; we hope to renew old acquaintances on our return, whenever that may be.

Singapore—one must agree it looks beautiful between showers, but nevertheless organised sport has to go by the board after such heavy rainfall at this time of the year, but the ship found the green fields a striking contrast to the hard, sun-baked pitches of Malta and we got cracking with the hockey sticks and "leather" in no uncertain manner.

The town of Singapore itself shows very little sign now of Jap occupation and once again all the treasures of the East can be bought, more expensive than pre-war, 'tis true, but that now is universal. Our wardrobes were quickly replenished. The smug satisfaction of having a tailor chase you round the ship with a tape measure and, when cornered, allow himself to be beaten down to half his initial fee, and return daily until on the seventh—hey presto!—your suit. Smack in, chaps; chits to D.O. If you want to look like George Raft ashore this is the place. So long, Singapore, see you later.

Hong Kong unfolds as we creep through scores of ships, junks and sampans. The Commander posted the usual sentries on entering harbour to keep the enthusiastic local tradesmen from shinning up the side and selling their wares without "screening." What a hope! Long bamboo poles streaked up on the guard rails in every possible place, and seconds later gold-toothed grinning Chinese were on deck as if out of Aladdin's lamp waving their recommends from ships-of-war 'way back to the days of "three water grog."

One must never fail to see Hong Kong. It is difficult to realise that a century ago it was a desolate plague spot with nothing but small native shacks, giant slugs and mosquitoes.

British enterprise and planning have made it the shop window of the East. The exquisite workmanship of the locals, their cheerful disposition and first-class shops, hotels and barbers, cannot be over-estimated. I will also venture to say that the China Fleet Club is amongst the finest in the world.

Life, of course, is not all visiting or sightseeing, and busy times on ship was the order of the days as can be readily understood. However, we all have our wood to chop and water to draw, so some excuse for not talking much "shop" is made here and now. As the staff is Chatham Division, it may be of interest to "Cookhamites" to know that C.Y.S. Gillie Potter is running his usual concert parties, Yeo. Fred Harrison has produced them, whilst Yeo. Kitchen—the crooning Yeoman—filled a big portion

of the bill. Yeo. Ridley, that old stalwart of sport and Hull City, is soon to leave us for the United Kingdom. We shall miss his beaming smile as the "day girls" splash all the crab fat over the flag deck.

C.P.O. Tel. Tony Lusted and P.O. Tel. O'Connel spend all their nights attempting to raise Malta or United Kingdom on the 28 meg. band with ardent desire to do it first shout with 2-watt output (some hope!). Their transmitters, made during passage from Malta to Hong Kong, are the "bees' knees" of the ham world. Try ZB1AY or ZB1AP. Most nights when in harbour they are on the air.

At the time of writing we are back again in Singapore consolidating our social successes, so from *Triumph* we wish all Communicators and others a very happy Christmas and good luck in the New Year.

C. K.

## EAST INDIES

No doubt, Communicators will have read in various newspapers and heard on the B.B.C. about the fire at Naval Headquarters, Trincomalee.

The fire is believed to have started in the Fleet film store at 1555 on Monday, 5th September. In a matter of seconds the whole of the main signal and wireless office were enveloped in flames following an explosion which blew the Communicators on watch violently round the various offices. The ratings who had just been relieved by the dog watchmen immediately manned the fire appliances, and did valuable work by helping to combat the flames, which spread rapidly, and it was quite some time before the Naval Fire Brigade were able to get the fire under control. The whole of the communication organisation was affected with every office being burned out.

While the fire was still raging, the F.C.O. organised emergency communications. The presence of H.M.I.S. *Delhi* at Trinco facilitated the clearing of signal traffic to the outside world. The efficient co-operation of the R.I.N. was of the greatest assistance.

By hard work on the part of the communication staff, electrical staff and the dockyard, a new communication centre was established in the undamaged mail office and normal communication facilities were available twenty-four hours after the outbreak, although we had to "go slow" for the first week, as arrangements were slightly "Heath Robinson."

The manner in which the communication staff worked to set the wheels of communication turning was very gratifying. Although "Minimise" was made, signal traffic remained higher than had been hoped, but the emergency arrangements were sufficient to handle it.

Sporting activities are always popular here in Trincomalee; the Communicators forming the nucleus of soccer, hockey and cricket teams. Now that the monsoon is changing from south-west to north-west, sailing is not so thrilling.

Since our last report Trincomalee has lost a very popular figure in the person of C.Y.S. "Jan" Burrows. All the V.A.Ds. are wandering around with a lost

look on their faces, and even the "tea boat" has fallen through—calamity!

There are no entries for the Matrimonial Stakes between V.A.Ds. and Signalmen (as opposed to Telegraphists) this quarter, but there is a strong rumour that there may be *two* runners in the spring.

## H.M.S. "BIRMINGHAM"

Yes . . . we admit it! We have been the backward boys and yet somehow we have always just missed the boat. It's not that we are so busy out here that we have not time, but there really is something about Trinco that gets on top of folks and we ought to know; ask us about it when we arrive in February, 1950. So besides being our second article, this will also be our swan-song (tenders for paying-off pendants are not invited).

All we can really do is tell you how our commission looks in retrospect. We went twice to East Africa, where we found the "natives" very friendly and the prospect of an East African Naval Force has given added impetus to those who would sell their birthright for a Swahili spear or something like that. We have been twice to the Bay of Bengal and we found India much the same on each occasion, and the soundest advice we can give is, don't go to India for "rabbits." We noticed that it was still exotic (in places) and the somewhat peculiar effluvia lingers on.

Very pleasant were our two visits to Singapore and we were all looking forward to a final trip there where most commodities in demand are plentiful. In place of what was to be our final docking we shall proceed to Bombay and the Gulf. Abadan is as good a place as any. Cheap watches and nylons, Master (should we say Effendi?), though the lack of devaluation may alter all that.

On the Communication side we have nothing new; in fact, something new is what we all need and no doubt there will be no shortage of oddities and idiosyncrasies at Leydene (nothing personal, honest).

We continue to be impressed with *THE COMMUNICATOR* and wish you lasting success, and that I think, is the final word of the *Birmingham* Communicators except to wish the remainder of this very select fraternity a very merry Christmas and all that is good in 1950.

B. E. H.

## "THE GLAMOROUS EAST"

H.M.S. "OSIRIS"

At long last all modifications to the R.N. Hall at the transmitter site have been completed. There are now installed four SWB8's and space and chaneling are available for four more. In addition there are the two mobile SWB8's parked immediately outside. R.N.H.Q. itself has lately been increased in size by the erection of a third Nissen hut. The Communication Branch swooped on this and seized half of it.



The Admiral and the Civil Lord (Mr. Edwards) carried out a comprehensive inspection of all naval installations in the area during October. Amongst other places, they visited the M.S.O., cryptographic office, A/T maintenance room, W/T workshop, receiver site, joint frequency checking station, transmitter site, officers' and ratings' tent lines, and W.R.N.S. quarters, and professed themselves entirely satisfied with all that they saw.

### Staff Changes

Since our last contribution there has been a steady run-down in male Communication ratings at Fayid. The four telegraphists at the remote receiver site have been replaced by six Wrens, and the naval representative at the joint frequency checking station is now a Wren telegraphist. The additional ratings are required at receivers, as it is considered undesirable for the Wrens to keep watch alone at night.

### W.R.N.S. News

New Wren quarters, within the W.R.A.C. camp, have been taken over and are entirely self-contained except for messing. After a long fight the Wrens are now able to bring non-commissioned boy-friends into their recreation room in quarters to an "informal evening" once a week. An all-Navy house-warming party was held in the new quarters and was a great success.

Things have started moving in the matrimonial field, two engaged and one married during the past two months. We have also said good-bye to the first two Wrens to leave us for demobilisation. To date nine Wrens have "signed on for pension."

### Leave

Leave has been given in the summer and all who wished have been able to go to Cyprus. There are two leave camps, at Troodos and Famagusta, where accommodation can be had for 11s. 6d. per day and 12s. per day respectively. Food is excellent. Lots of swimming in Famagusta, and in Troodos climbing and walking were favourites.

### "London" and "Amethyst"

Naval prestige here has received a considerable boost by the passages of *London* and *Amethyst*. On both occasions the Army lined the bank of the Canal and the R.A.F. arranged air demonstrations. In addition, the indigenous population took a considerable and most favourable interest.

### Amateur Theatricals

The G.H.Q. Theatre Club at Fayid is a very thriving concern which puts on a good show once a month. During the past year the S.C.O. has established himself as the regular male lead and has steadily recruited more and more members of the R.N. into the cast or back-stage team. L./Wren

(Sig.) Stickland helps as a dresser and Wren (Tel.) James played the housekeeper in "Pygmalion," and in the latest successful production ("Othello") naval members of the audience were delighted to see C.Y.S. Clarke clad in a medieval sailor's skirt, roaring out messages in his bull voice, and, finally, the villain Iago (S.C.O.) being bundled off extremely roughly by the Captain of the Guard (Mr. Deadman, C.C.O.).

### Cricket

The R.N. Communicators' team reached the final of the 3 G.H.Q. Signals Regimental Competition.

### Sailing

Sailing has been as popular as ever and, in addition to those enthusiasts who go racing, about a dozen Wrens and ratings have been taken sailing in our yacht, the *Plum*, by the S.C.O. and his namesake. On all occasions it has been fair to say that a good time was had by (practically) all. It was a notable fact that on one rough and windy day four Wrens were able to consume their tea and buns with a gusto not shared by the two radio electricians who were also in the boat.

### Water Polo

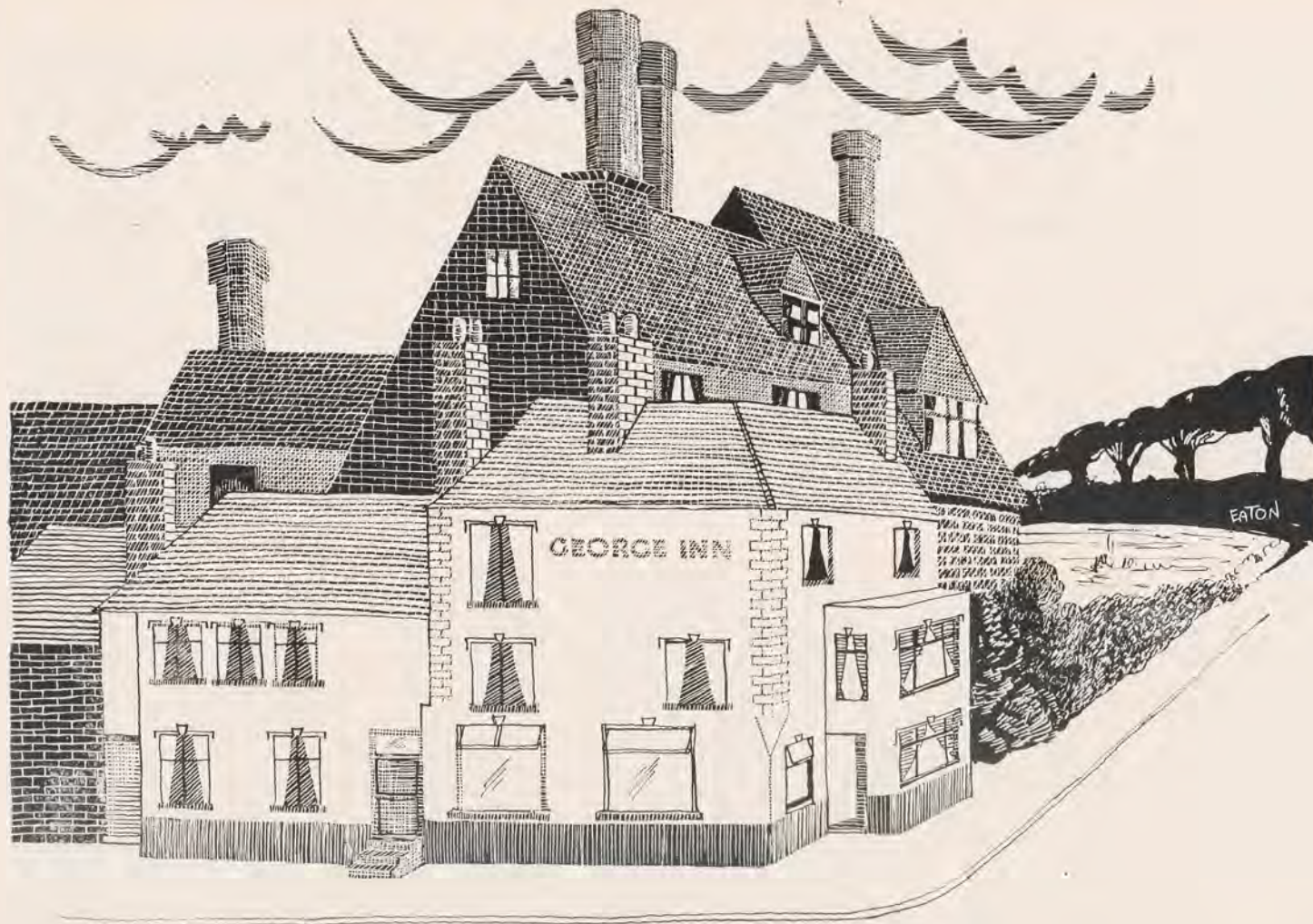
The R.N. water-polo team did not have a very successful season, but two members (Mr. Deadman, C.C.O., and C.Y.S. Barrett) were included in the 3 G.H.Q. Signal Regiment team which won Canal South Competition and were narrowly defeated by H.Q. British Troops in Egypt, in the semi-final of the Army (Egypt) Championships. H.Q. B.T.E., went on to win the final.

### Lawn Tennis

Lawn tennis has proved extremely popular of late. Two R.N. mixed doubles handicap tournaments have been organised by the S.C.O. which were well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all. In these competitions partners were drawn for and, as a result of a self-adjusting handicap and a high degree of arithmetical dexterity on the part of the organiser, the result was neither a foregone conclusion nor did the best players necessarily win.

The Admiral then offered a cup for an "Osiris" Mixed Doubles Championship. Eighteen couples entered and the eventual winners were Radio Electrician Staley and Wren Cox.

The Fayid Lawn Tennis Championships took place in early October and attracted a very large entry. About a dozen R.N. officers, ratings and Wrens entered various events, but, sad to relate, very few cleared the first hurdle. However, the naval flag was kept flying in all three finals by the S.C.O., who won both the singles and the mixed.



### THE GEORGE INN, PORTSDOWN

This well-known inn is pleasantly situated on the crest of Portsdown Hill midway between Fort Widley and Fort Purbrook, and commands a superb view of Portsmouth and its approaches. The George was a coaching inn and undoubtedly entertained many famous naval heroes who would call here on their way to join their ships. That man-of-the-world, Samuel Pepys, diarist and Secretary to the Admiralty, must surely have lowered one or two at the George.



## SOUTH ATLANTIC

### H.M.S. "NIGERIA"

We have been informed that this will be our first contribution to "our" magazine (at least during this commission). For our lack of support we humbly apologise, and promise to endeavour in future to make regular contributions.

The most important event for us during the past three months has been the East Coast cruise of six weeks, during which we took in such places as Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, Lorenzo Marques and Beira. The C-in-C., Vice-Admiral E. D. B. McCarthy, C.B., D.S.O., was with us throughout the cruise (something unusual in these days of aircraft).

During the early stages of the cruise extensive exercises were carried out in company with the remainder of the squadron, supplemented by ships of the S.A.N.F. and aircraft of the S.A.A.F. Communications played a big part in the exercises, thus enabling the junior ratings (many of whom are in their first "comish") to get in some very useful practical experience. A pleasing feature of the exercises was the wealth of knowledge shown by the S.A.N.F. ships in regard to the new books. Though the "new look" is beginning to wear off these bibles, one can still hear the old 'uns blessing them in true naval fashion, whilst, in spite of all, C.Y.S. Roberts valiantly continues to sell the goods.

We arrived in Durban just in time for the classic race of the year, "The July." The question that has been asked many times since is: "Would it have been better had we delayed our arrival until after the race?" Though we could not be held responsible for any bookies applying for poor relief, a good time was had by all. As we were there for fourteen days, you can bet we made the best of it. For those who have had the good fortune to visit Durban, you may be interested to know that the "Lady in White" still greets the ships as they slide to their berths.

Since the S.T.C. came into being we have been without the services of P.O. Tels. Spencer and Rule and Yeo. Truscott and Whitehead, who have been doing a job of instructing Tels. and Sigs. for the Leading rate as well as taking the juniors on refresher courses. In the way of advancement things have been moving apace since the F.C.O. came to stay with us. Very soon, for example, we lose all our Ords. and Boys to the G.I., who is to teach them the rudiments of squad drill and the rifle. Needless to say, they are not looking forward to this necessary requirement for advancement. What Communicator does?

We regret to say that except for rifle shooting we have not shone in the inter-part tournaments, but we can sport some good individuals and are proud of the fact that the Ship's first teams have called upon three of our soccer players, three of our hockey players, and two of our rugger players.

Wedding bells have rung no fewer than five times for Communicators of "The Nigger" during the past twelve months, the people in question being, Yeo.

Whitehead, L./Sig. Allen, Sig. Harris, Tel. Quick and Cpl. Clark (R.M. Sig. Section attached to W/T Section). The question now being asked is: "For whom does the bell toll next?" There are many eligible candidates.

We've just heard that the West Coast cruise will be of ten weeks' duration. A.B. Smith's missus was wrong; she led us to believe it was only six weeks. Just goes to show you can never trust a woman.

L. C.

### West Coast Cruise

The 29th of September, with H.M.S. *Nereide*, saw our arrival at Walvis Bay after a very uneventful trip, at least as far as exercises and the like were concerned, but quite a pleasant one in regard to entertainments. Quite a programme has been worked out for the cruise, amongst the first being a "quiz" in which the "Comms." managed to scrape through the first round to have as their next opponents the C.P.Os.' Mess.

Our stay at Walvis Bay was for a period of three days, and apart from the usual round of sports, and the fact that the ship's company very nearly drank the town dry, very little out of the ordinary occurred. Oh! yes . . . we did hear that a couple of the lads went in search of some of those diamonds one hears can be found along the sea shore, but the only thing they were rewarded with was a pair of old boots and a little wisdom.

The next port of call was Libreville, in French Equatorial Africa. Our stay here was for a brief two days, but quite a full two days they turned out to be. A hundred of the ship's company were invited to an "aperitif" by the N.C.Os. of the French garrison. On arrival they found that, whilst beer was scarce, cognac was flowing like water, and that they could consume as much as they wished. Some did, only to find that the following day they were the guest of the Commander at his table. Being of a kind nature he (the Commander) gave consideration to the fact that the S.A. stuff (to which the lads were accustomed) was not as potent as the French product.

The 12th of October saw our arrival at Takoradi for a six-day stay, and quite a hectic period it was destined to be. It was here that the C-in-C. came aboard, having flown to Takoradi. As in the other places, a full sports programme was arranged in which once again the honours were even. We had no sooner fallen in "special sea duty men" than the M.A.A. was bombarded with invitations from the various Army and R.A.F. messes ashore as well as with invitations from quite a number of the local residents and people up-country to entertain the ship's company. Grippo's were really in abundance, and taken advantage of. Amongst the lucky ones to be drawn for the trips up-country were no fewer than four Comms., namely C.P.O. Tel. Martin, L./Tel. Tart, Cpl. Clark and O./Tel. Ireland. They visited a gold mine amongst many other places but, they are no richer for that. Of their host and their trip they cannot speak too highly. The 18th saw us leaving

Takoradi with many suffering from an overdose of alcoholic remorse.

Freetown was the next port into which we turned our bows. For your correspondent it was a case of revisiting an old haunt, having served there for a period during 1941-42. Quite a number of changes have taken place since those days; for example, there is quite a modern cinema in the town which goes under the name of Odeon, as well as a number of new bars. Many of the old haunts are still in being, such as "The Cotton Tree" and "Paradise Bar," whilst the old playing fields down at "King Tom" are a veritable forest in comparison with what they used to be like. The standard of the soccer out in this part is still high, though I did notice that the natives seem to have gone in for wearing football boots. Maybe that is due to our greater export drive. Our first eleven were beaten 2 goals to 1 after a very hard-fought game which added around £300 to the local sports fund. Many of the lads took advantage of the bathing beach at Juba, where I was told there is a N.A.A.F.I. bar—another innovation since those early years.

Places yet to be visited are Dakar, Bathurst, Accra, Lagos, Pointe Noire and Loanda, but, in order to catch the post and the Christmas Number, I shall have to leave them until my next letter.

Now a little on other items. First the Fleet Regatta. We won the "Cock" and the Boys' Crew, which was represented by five of the six Comms. Boys in the ship at the time, namely, B./Sig. Canning, B./Sig. Herdman, B./Sig. Anthony, B./Tel. Hall and B./Tel. Osmond, managed to obtain one point from their race which made certain that the "Cock" was coming aboard the "Nigger." The ship's company showed their appreciation by giving the lads a good chuck up and a monetary reward. All except Osmond (who is a *Ganges* lad) are ex-Bruce lads.

Since my last letter we have experienced a few staff changes. We wish those who have left us, namely, Yeo. Morgan, better known as "Rats" (taking his twelve), Yeo. Whitehead (taking his twelve), L./Sig. Wright (taking pensh) and those who will have left us, namely, C.P.O. Tel. Martin (taking twelve in South Africa) and L./Sig. Wilkinson (taking twelve plus three extended) the best of luck in their new venture and trust that their beer mugs will always be full. As far as "Rats" is concerned, we have very little doubts on that score. We have heard that the "Chiefy" is kitting himself up with some prospector's tools in preparation for the next gold rush. Maybe he got the idea from his trip up-country. Did you, "Chiefy"?

Cheerio, Comms.

L. C.

## S.T.C., KLAVER

The end of the war brought inevitable reductions in ships and personnel on the South Atlantic Station and with it the regrettable necessity of closing down the Signal School which operated during hostilities.

Having regard to the reduced numbers of Communicators available to meet station operational and administrative requirements, it is not altogether surprising that organised training on a signal school basis was temporarily eclipsed, but we are happy to say that today in place of the old wooden huts which formerly constituted the S.T.C. there is now a new spacious building complete with modern classrooms and equipment.

For the benefit of those of the branch who may sojourn this way in the future and who may wonder what are the prospects of a course for higher rating, we give a brief outline of the School and its activities to date. That a modern S.T.C. is available on this station for ratings of the Communication Branch is largely due to the keen interest and co-operation of the present F.C.O. (Lt. Cdr. Bush, R.N.), his predecessor, and Mr. Wright, C.C.O., R.N. (the last-named left us in March to return to the United Kingdom). Many difficulties and snags arising from a variety of causes were, of course, met, and had to be overcome before the School became really established.

Klaver S.T.C. is situated on a hill some 900 feet above sea-level and overlooks Simonstown and the dockyard. Recently completed, it consists chiefly of a voice trainer, Morse and typing room with facilities for up to twenty ratings, teleprinter and telex room, three other large rooms housing modern receivers and transmitters, and two general purpose classrooms. The new 600 series are awaited with keen interest, and when available will, of course, replace some of the older existing equipment.

So far the biggest snag appears to have been the inaccessibility of the School from the dockyard and town; to get to the School involves either a trip over a dusty road of some six miles or alternatively (if one is sufficiently energetic) there is a short cut up the hill by way of several hundred steps. In this connection, intending climbers are advised to leave their bags and hammocks to follow on, although it has been known for these articles to accompany their owner. Transport, although laid on, is meagre, since the dollar question continues to raise its head even in the Union, and the petrol allowed for Service transport is cut to a fine minimum. The difficulties which intending libertymen meet are, however, largely offset by an over-all advantage which candidates enjoy in the fact that, whilst on course, ratings are away from and spared the usual routines and thus enabled to give their full attention and time to study, and that in congenial and pleasant surroundings.

From station amenities we recently received sports equipment to the value of £20 which should prove of great value to those requiring occasional diversion from their more serious activities. A suggestion put forward, namely, for the provision of scooters (presumably for the use of libertymen wishing to ride down the hill), was not, we hasten to add, taken seriously.

The S.T.C. commands an excellent view of the



peninsula as far north as Table Mountain and overlooks False Bay (so named by Vasco da Gama, who, in attempting to round the Cape in his early voyages from the Indies, mistook the bay for the open Atlantic). Probably out of respect for I.T., all the windows of the building are sufficiently high to ensure that the attention of pupils is not distracted by the beckoning beauty of Mother Nature.

Drawn mainly from the Flagship (H.M.S. *Nigeria*) the instructional staff consists of one C.Y.S., two Yeomen and two P.O. Tels. The C.Y.S. is, however, drafted by R.N.B., Chatham. Sickness hit the staff hard at the beginning of August, when the Chief Yeoman was taken to hospital early one morning suffering with stomach ulcers, to be followed soon afterwards by one of our P.O. Tels. unfortunately down with typhoid. The C.Y.S., we are happy to say, is now with us once again and it is hoped that P.O. Tel. Rule will be fit for duty before this appears in print.

Courses to qualify Communicators up to the Leading rate started in February of this year, and by the end of December it is anticipated that three Ldg. Tels. and two Ldg. Sigs. Q classes will have been completed, together with several miscellaneous classes of varying duration. A noticeable increase in the standards of typing efficiency, especially on the part of telegraphists, has been in evidence since the beginning of the year, and more candidates are presenting themselves already well versed in the art of Morse typing before courses start. This seems to indicate that ratings are now realising the necessity for proficient typing and are really getting down to serious practice, and of course some of the more junior members have had the benefit of initial instruction in the various training establishments at home. Results of copy typing examinations, however, stress the importance of ratings concentrating on accuracy as opposed to speed, which will come with practice.

To C.Y.S. Collins and Yeo. Whitehead who have returned home we wish the best of luck and extend a welcome to their reliefs (C.Y.S. Whitehouse and Yeo. Edwards). May all Communicators and especially those away from home enjoy a happy Christmas and good fortune in 1950.

J. T.

## SIMONSTOWN W/T STATION

Simonstown W/T comprises the transmitting station at Cape East, thirty miles north-east of Simonstown; the transmitting station at Cape South (Klaver), 900 feet directly above Simonstown, but six miles distant by road; the receiving station Slangkop (Snakehead), which is a Union Post Office station shared by the R.N. and is actually situated at the village of Kommetjie, twelve miles north-west of Simonstown. All three stations are in isolated areas and difficult of access without motor transport, rendering physical co-operation almost impossible. The complement of the three stations forms the standing part of H.M.S. *Afrikander*, manned from Chatham at present.

Cape East has a staff of six electrical ratings, one P.O. Tel., and one Tel. There is a mediocre married quarter for one family; the remaining married families find private accommodation at or near Mowbray some thirteen miles distant on the main line to Capetown. Tennis is the only outdoor recreation available, but the staff have been very enterprising in their smallholding and gardening activities, owning a cow, a piggery, chickens, bees and a very fine garden of vegetables and flowers.

Cape South has a complement similar to Cape East. One married quarter is available, the remaining married families living at various places along the main line from Simonstown to Capetown. Tennis is the only outdoor recreation available.

Slangkop, the receiving station, has a staff of one C.P.O. Tel., four P.O. Tels., four Ldg. Tels. and thirty-four Tels./O. Tels., and their work is mainly connected with the long-distance ship-shore H.F. scheme, this being the second-largest overseas area station. The work requires a high standard of W/T operating combined with a thorough knowledge of commercial procedure. Many of the present staff are extended service; there are no daymen and C.P.O. Tel. Wearmouth has his work cut out handling the numerous situations that arise. However, he is equal to all of them, and in addition usually finds time to take part in sporting events with equal energy; perhaps it is his Shotley training that is responsible.

No married quarters are available and most of the married staff live in private accommodation at or near Fishhoek, seven miles distant on the main line to Capetown. Tennis is the only outdoor recreation available on the station, there is a fairly reasonable beach for swimming some half a mile away, but this is somewhat marred by the overpowering stench of seaweed rotting in the sun, plus millions of sandfleas and flies, which do not permit comfortable sunbathing.

At all three stations the grounds are covered with thick bush which is the haunt of numerous poisonous snakes, including cobras, puff adders and the skaap steeker. Ticks are legion; these append themselves to one's ankles and burrow into the skin, gorging themselves with blood. They can and do set up an unpleasant fever, akin to typhoid and therefore to be



"I'm told this new Surgeon is nothing but a vet, chaps."

avoided. In view of these obstacles the study of the various plentiful and beautiful flora and fauna is best carried out from the comparative safety of the paths and roads; alternatively, one can don seaboots or boots and gaiters. During the hot, dry summer bush fires are prevalent, and when these occur it is a case of all hands in to beat the flames, which get a tremendous hold in the prevailing high winds.

In addition to the W/T stations we have our main signal office situated in the C-in-C.'s Offices, Simonstown, manned by a Yeoman, four Ldg. Sigs. and one Sig. and connected to Slangkop by teleprinter.

Communication staffs form the major part of H.M.S. *Afrikaner* soccer team. They have recently won the Castle Cup in the Soccer League, not losing a match. They also reached the semi-final of the Castle Cup Knock-out Competition, losing after extra time, having lost the services of P.O. Tel. Brooks, who received a severe eye injury (incidentally, Brooks is well known in R.N. athletic circles). The soccer results were particularly outstanding in view of the fact that there is no possibility of practice at any of the three stations; the players are all watchkeepers and in addition to playing have the long journey to and from Simonstown to face. The cricket season is just starting and we expect to take an active part in that.

L.R.E.M. Robinson, of Cape South, put up a very good performance recently in getting fourth place in the Fleet Cross-Country Championship.

Each station has a small canteen and occasionally runs very successful dances and social evenings which are only marred by the prospect of the long journey home.

Following is an extract from *The Signal* of October 1949 (the official organ of the Radio Officers' Union)

"Regarding the H/F Stations at Capetown, you may be as surprised as I was to learn that they are operated by R.N. ratings whose average age some months ago when I had a visit from four of them was 23, and their average age experience was two years, and aren't they quick on the draw? ZSJ3, ZSJ4, and ZSJ5, with whom I mostly work have only to be called once and they come back straight away, they certainly aren't asleep on the job, I take off my hat to their excellent listening watch."

### AMERICAN AND WEST INDIES STATION

The summer cruise this year took ships of the Squadron to ports in Newfoundland, the Maritime Provinces, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the eastern seaboard of the United States, the British West Indies and some republics of the Caribbean. Shortly before the commencement of the cruise, our new C-in-C., Vice Admiral Symonds-Taylor, introduced himself to his command by taking the two Bay class frigates to sea for an evolutionary "Admiral's inspection" at the end of June, and by a twenty-four-hour sortie with the entire Squadron on 4th July. On both of these occasions the Signal staffs flashed

and flagged, voiced and buzzed incessantly in a terrific bout of exercises and drills.

H.M.S. *Whitesand Bay*, after a very short period on the station, sailed from Bermuda on 19th July to follow the track of H.M.S. *Jamaica* to the Far East. A little less than three months later the Squadron was happy to greet H.M.S. *Sparrow* returning to these waters after refitting and recommissioning in the United Kingdom. In her new role of "Captain Frigates," *Sparrow* now has a Lt. (C), namely, F. D. Kelly, late of *Mercury 2*.

Mr. Eric Bristow, the C.C.O. of the Flagship, has departed to make room for Mr. Shutt, which change, it is said, necessitated adjustments to the trim of the *Glasgow*.

The economy axe which had been gently chipping away at Bermuda W/T suddenly struck with full violence on 31st October when all aeriels were earthed and the crew proceeded to their home depot. Through the medium of *THE COMMUNICATOR* we wish them all a pleasant leave, a white Christmas and a happy ship in the New Year.

Communication with the outside world is now being maintained by a W/T guardship; in the absence of H.M. ships all traffic will be routed via Cable and Wireless.

Securely berthed in Grassy Bay, H.M.S. *Malabar* graciously acknowledges her elevation to the status of a real ship as signified by A.F.O. 2539/49, and extends thanks to the Signal Station buntings whose perseverance with all passing merchant vessels led to this signal honour.



CABOT'S TOWER

\* Our visit to St. Johns, Newfoundland, during the summer cruise of H.M.S. *Glasgow* seemed at first to have little to offer us from a Communication interest point of view. Yet this little town is the site of possibly one of the greatest developments in Communication history, for it was here in 1901, but four or five years after the propagation of wireless waves had been evolved, that signals were received, transmitted from an aerial no less than 1,800 miles distant. Even to our standards of today that range is not small.



Just to the north of the town, five hundred feet above sea-level and overlooking the narrow entrance to the harbour, stands Signal Hill. On 22nd June, 1897, the foundation-stone of a tower, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of Newfoundland by John Cabot, was laid. The tower was completed in 1900, and in 1932 it was made the headquarters of the coast station of St. Johns, call-sign VON. The station is now equipped with modern "Canadian Marconi" apparatus.

The name of Marconi is not a new one on Signal Hill. Twenty feet or so from Cabot's Tower is the place from which Guglielmo Marconi flew his kite aerial on 12th December, 1901, and received signals transmitted from Poldhu, Cornwall, nearly two thousand miles away. The spot is now marked by a stone pillar.



The Plaque on the stone pillar

One would imagine that Marconi would have used the then new tower in which to erect his receiver, but such was not the case I was informed by the operator of VON. He preferred a hospital building slightly down the hillside. This building is now destroyed. His receiver must have been a coherer or magnetic detector type, as it was before the introduction of the crystal detector. Inquiries as to the frequency used indicated that it was probably in the region of 35 to 40 kc/s. Perhaps that is why VON seems to have a marked preference for L.F.!

Why did Marconi choose St. Johns for his experiments? Presumably for the same reason that Alcock and Brown took off from here, passing over Signal Hill as they climbed, in their historic flight across the Atlantic. It is the closest seaport on the North American Continent to Europe. Another good reason would be that Marconi knew a good place to fly a kite when he saw it!

E. B.

## ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

Being at the other end of the world, the going's on "Down Under" are sometimes forgotten, and this article is an attempt to put you in the picture.

The R.A.N. now consists of an aircraft carrier, the *Sydney*, carrying one squadron of Sea Furies and one of Fireflies, the 8-inch cruiser *Australia*, two Tribal class destroyers, *Warramunga* and *Bataan*, and three frigates, *Shoalhaven*, *Culgoa* and *Murchison*. In addition, there are three destroyers and one frigate "immobilised," a condition bordering on reserve, and a number of cruisers, destroyers and frigates in reserve.

All naval training is done at Flinders Naval Depot, about sixty miles from Melbourne, where the various schools, e.g., Signals, Gunnery, etc., are situated. New entry training is also carried out there, and the Naval College for the training of officers is also a part of the Depot.

The main naval base is at Sydney, where Garden Island Dockyard does the majority of naval repairs; some of you no doubt will have happy memories of Sydney in the days of the British Pacific Fleet.

The primary tasks of the Australian ships are to "show the flag" round Australia and the islands of the North, a not inconsiderable feat where distances are great; and to maintain a frigate or destroyer in Japanese waters. The latter does six months' term of duty and then returns to Sydney for leave and refit; as *Murchison* is used solely for radar training, this commitment, coupled with providing an attendant destroyed for the carrier, keeps the light craft busy.

The two large ships cruise round the coast and the islands to the North, and at other times go to Jervis Bay, a large, land-locked anchorage about a hundred miles south of Sydney, for exercises.

The event of the year was the arrival of the *Sydney*, the first Australian carrier; she has just finished working up and is now wearing the flag of Rear-Admiral H. B. Farncomb, C.B., D.S.O., M.V.O., the Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet. Her first cruise as flagship is to Manus, again well known to the British Pacific Fleet, Honiara, and Brisbane, then south to join with the Royal New Zealand Squadron, consisting of *Bellona* and five frigates, for exercises at Jervis Bay.

Our big disappointment was the cancellation of the Royal cruise, but out here many still have hopes that Their Majesties will come later on, when the King is fully recovered.

For the many "Pommies" out here life has its ups and downs: large, fat steaks being offset by nowhere to live, unrationed petrol but no gas, light or coal, but generally there are few complaints and "Kipper" and "Digger" work in well together.

As you are coming to the end of your summer we are saying good-bye to our winter and looking forward to sunny days in the surf and on the beach. So till our next article, "Cheerio" to all Communicators and especially to all "Diggers" in the Royal Navy.

J. E. P.

## ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY

With the arrival of H.M.N.Z.S. *Tutira* and *Rotoiti*, farewelled by none other than Wren Beryl Nye (ex-W.R.N.S. 11) and C.Y.S. Fargher, R.N.Z.N., the New Zealand Squadron is now at its full strength of five frigates, plus the *Bellona* as flagship, negative a flag.

Signals especially on the V/S side have left a lot to be desired. This was largely owing to the lack of competition until the recent formation of the squadron. In our first large exercise period we have amalgamated with the Australian Fleet and many old faces of *Mercury* have been united. In *Bellona* we have Lt. Cdr. Wake-Walker, R.N., and C.Y.S. Higson; Lt. Carr is serving as First Lieutenant of 11th F.F. Leader *Taupo*, Lt. Lesh in *Warramunga*, whilst in H.M.A.S. *Sydney*, incidentally nearly as famous as *Our Arbour Bridge*, there are Lt. Pope, R.N., C.Y.S. Rogerson, and the well-known figure of C.R.E. Liddell.

The exercises have been of great value, especially for the youngsters who have never seen so many ships before. Apart from swinging the axis through 80 degrees and putting a straight line screen on circle two, the exercises have been considered very successful

from a Communicator's point of view.

Following the present cruise, the Squadron hopes to remain in Auckland so as to be able to witness the Empire Games, and it is hoped that the Australian Fleet will pay us a visit so that we shall be able to repay some of the hospitality we are receiving here.

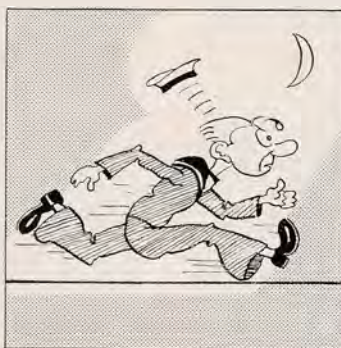
A new arrival seen in Auckland before departure was Mr. Bloodworth, now nicely settled in a shore number.

It is with pride we notice that C.P.O. Tel. Hlsley has gained notice in the marksmanship world, and congratulations to our "Jane" with a hope she likes "Civvie Street." We should also like to take the opportunity of wishing a merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all Communicators, especially those at *Mercury*, and *Mercury* stanchions now at Malta, namely, C.Y.S. Dawson Blood and C.P.O. Tel. Baiston. The New Zealanders who have gone through *Mercury* in the past two years appreciate very much the good times they had there and especially send regards to the sewing circle in the M.T. who mended many a garment.

Till the next number of *THE COMMUNICATOR* we wish you all Kia Ora Katoa.

R. H.

## Knocker White







## ADVANCEMENT NOTES

The benefits derived from making your application to qualify for higher rating at the earliest possible date have already been pointed out in previous articles, but, judging from the number of recommendations received, it would appear that it is still not generally appreciated that in neglecting to obtain an early "basic date" you are imposing a handicap on yourselves which will affect not only the whole of your Service career but, in the case of ratings who complete time for pension, a reduction in the amount of pension you will receive for the rest of your life.

It is particularly noticeable that in the case of Signalmen the number of applications to qualify for Leading Signalmen falls far short of the numbers required to fill the courses and to make good the wastage which will occur through discharges, promotions, invalidings, etc., This is perhaps due to a mistaken impression that because advancement to C.Y.S. is restricted to four per depot per year (token advancements) owing to the present overbearing

in that rate, promotion to Yeomen and Leading Signalmen must necessarily also be restricted. *This is not so.*

There are at present vacancies for fifty-two Yeomen and twenty-seven Signalmen and it is estimated that a further 153 vacancies for Leading Signalmen will occur during 1950. Thus it will be seen that well over 200 Leading Signalmen will be required in the next year and in consequence advancement will continue to be rapid.

It may be interesting to know also what the situation is as regards the other rates and the table below shows the estimated requirements of each depot for the next year.

It will thus be seen that in every case the numbers recommended for courses fall a long way short of the numbers required, especially in the case of Signalman for Leading Signalman, where only eighty-seven of the required 232 have volunteered. It therefore follows that if you make your application for a course as soon as you are eligible you will make the most of the opportunity of early advancement which now exists.

It is appreciated that in some cases men have to wait some time for their course after being recommended. This is due to the present shortage of ratings which makes it impossible to relieve men for courses in strict accordance with their position on the course roster. *But* the earlier you get your name on the course roster the less risk there is of your "losing deal" through having to wait for a course *and* your basic date will place you higher on the advancement roster than it would otherwise be.

*So don't let the grass grow under your feet—wherever you are, at home or abroad, put in that request now.*

## RE-ENTRIES

New rules have now been issued with regard to the readvancement of re-entries up to the rating held on discharge (A.F.O. P326/49). Briefly, they may be summarised as follows:

Ratings who were serving in the equivalent rating of Able Seaman or above will re-enter in the equi-

	Portsmouth			Chatham			Devonport			Total Required
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	
For Chief P.O. Tel. ..	Nil	16	—	Nil	14	—	11	10	—	51
For P.O. Tel. ...	25	57	67	13	48	49	56	41	32	240
For Leading Tel. ..	64	92	58	33	80	60	62	67	83	399
For Chief Yeo. of Sigs. ...	Nil	4	—	Nil	4	—	Nil	4	—	12
For Yeo. of Sig. ...	20	29	26	10	19	40	22	22	32	122
For Leading Sig. ...	Nil	74	28	Nil	51	20	39	68	39	232

A=Number of vacancies at present existing.

B=Number of additional vacancies which will occur during 1950.

C=Numbers recommended and awaiting course.

valent rating of Able Seaman and may be readvanced by stages up to the rating previously held (provided they are fully qualified and a vacancy exists) without having to wait for a recommendation on Form S507 or for readjustment of the roster. Thus in most cases in the Communications Branch, the rate of readvancement up to the rate formerly held has been speeded up so that it only takes a few days instead of many months. It must be emphasised, however, that Lower Standard ratings must pass the Higher Standard examination before they can be readvanced.

Ratings who have been absent from the Service for more than five years will re-enter in the Ordinary rate and will have to follow the normal rules for advancement.

J. S. W.



#### OUTLINE OF RADIO. (Newnes; 21s.)

The preface to the book states that one of its objects is "to provide a readable up-to-date outline of the principles upon which the whole science of radio is based." On reading that its main aim is so simple and so eminently desirable, one might be excused a cautious approach to it, for books carrying titles such as "Radio Made Easy" often fail in their object, their authors also excelling at making many other arts, crafts and sciences easy. One is reassured, however, on learning that this book is the work of seven people, each a specialist in some sphere of the subject—teaching, research or practice.

It does succeed in being readable, largely by avoiding mathematics as much as possible, what mathematics there is being elementary but sufficient for the attainment of the book's aims. It introduces Ohm's law, the sparker's nightmare, almost apologetically, and yet, later on, introduces the operator j in an admirably painless manner. The tedious business of investigating phase relationships in A.C. circuits is sensibly neglected.

Of course, it must not escape criticism. It is occasionally guilty of loose usage of some electrical terms, but one supposes that some licence must be allowed in a book of this kind. Over-simplification of some parts of the subject leads to difficulties when more advanced circuits have to be explained. For example, a fuller treatment of the half-wave rectifier would have paid dividends when dealing with the diode and A.V.C. detectors, and in particular with the leaky grid detector, which manages to appear much more difficult than is necessary.

The whole field of radio science seems to have been covered, the information provided always being of the kind that one considers "useful." A good feature is that the early chapters on how electricity is produced, used and measured are devoted, in an

absorbing and comprehensive manner to creating a general background for the main part of the work to follow. There are long chapters on Television, Radar and Nav aids (D/F, Loran and Gee). The indexing is good and the text is amply and well illustrated.

What appeals most is that one can refer to this book for almost any radio device or circuit, however uncommon, and obtain quickly a fair idea of "what it is all about."

W. G. J.

"WIRELESS WORLD" DIARY. (Hilfe & Sons Ltd.: bound in imitation leather, 3s. 4½d.)

The eighty reference pages of this diary, now in its 32nd year of publication, contain information, mostly technical, of the kind that every wireless man needs but can seldom memorise. The data are those most widely useful in the design and maintenance of radio equipment. In addition there are general reference pages giving a summary of existing regulations affecting the wireless user (including a page on the new Wireless Telegraphy Act), addresses of radio organisations, etc.

Compiled by the technical staff of *Wireless World*, the section includes a large selection of useful formulae, abacs for easy graphical estimation of such things as coil windings and circuit constants, lists of unit abbreviations, definitions and classifications, with a number of miscellaneous circuit diagrams. In addition to general revision of the reference pages, the valve-base tables have been entirely redone, and connections for over 500 valves are now given in more convenient form.

Data for television and extra-short-wave aerials have been revised to meet the projected new B.B.C. services.

All copies are now in the hands of stationers and booksellers and the publishers cannot fulfil individual orders.

GUIDE TO BROADCASTING STATIONS. Fifth Edition. (Hilfe & Sons Ltd.; 88 pp.; 1s. 6d., Postage 1d.)

Almost without exception Europe's four hundred long- and medium-wave broadcasting stations will be changing their wavelengths next March when the Copenhagen Frequency Allocation Plan comes into operation. In order that this new edition of "Guide to Broadcasting Stations" should not be out of date within a few months, it has been enlarged and includes, in addition to the present operating details of Europe's stations, those which will come into force on 15th March, 1950.

Operating details of nearly 1,300 short-wave stations of the world, which have been checked against the frequency measurements made at the B.B.C. receiving station at Tatsfield, are also given in tabular form both geographically and in order of frequency.

In addition to the above information on broadcasting stations, this booklet includes details of Europe's television and E.H.F. broadcasting stations, and special service stations—such as meteorological and standard frequency transmitters; world time constants; revised lists of international call signs; and wave-length-frequency conversion table.



# Knocker

## AND THE STARS



"Well, well, well," I greeted the Big Sailor as he came into the bar parlour of the 'Pick and Pencil.' "A happy New Year to you, my friend; a very happy New Year."

The sailor grunted with the disillusioned air of a man who having seen one New Year has seen 'em all. "Get me a pint," he ordered.

I pride myself as a man able to take a hint, and on whom innuendo is not lost. I tolled the bell.

It was obvious that my large friend was not his usual self, but experience has taught me not to attempt to draw him out. If anything bothers him he unselfishly shares it with the nearest person, but in his own good time.

"Do you believe in horoscopes?" he asked after the last of his pint had gurgled its way into obscurity.

"You mean 'horoscopes'," I corrected him, gently. "There is only one r in 'horoscope'."

He looked at me suspiciously.

"How d'you know I put two r's in?"

"It's difficult to explain," I shrugged. "A certain inflexion; a slight deviation in tone —"

"All right, all right! Skip it. I said *horroscope* and I mean *horroscope*. Do you believe in 'em?"

"I've had no experience of them," I replied. "However, I'd be more than delighted to hear what you have to say."

In answer to my nod Flossie had replenished the glasses.

"I wouldn't want to catch anything," grumbled the Salt. "Are you sure this was my glass?"

"Why not ask the stars?" I riposted. I am like that, you know. Always there with a smart answer; a master of repartee. Usually, however, the other chap has been gone ten minutes before I think of it.

The Big Sailor smiled faintly.

"O.K., brother. It isn't your fault. No use getting on to you."

I'm fairly used to the uncertain temper of the Sailor by now, and I never let it bother me. After all, look at the way Dr. Johnson treated Boswell. I am not Boswell, of course, but he was pretty good too.

"You were going to tell me something about horoscopes," I prompted.

"Oh, yes," said the Big Sailor. "Well, Knocker and me had occasion to turn our backs on the patrol in Pompey station, so we pretended to be busy at the

bookstall. There was a magazine on view called *Get Acquainted with the Stars*, and Knocker, who has a passion for Margaret Lockwood and Betty Grable, bought a copy. It set him back five bob, but, as he shrewdly pointed out, who wouldn't give a dollar for an introduction to those two bundles of female loveliness?

"Besides," said Knocker, labouring the point, "just imagine the faces of Wiggy Bennett and Rattler Morgan if I can persuade Miss Lockwood to come aboard the old *Intolerable* for tea."

"Glancing over our shoulders we saw the patrol having a heart-to-heart talk with a Liverpool stoker in his cups, so we beat it swiftly to the Y.M.C.A. for a spot of tea and the necessary privacy to inspect our purchase."

"To Knocker's chagrin, there was no mention of Miss Lockwood or Miss Grable. Not even a picture of Joan Bennett in her scanties. Instead, there was a lot of guff about Venus and Mercury, and some queer pictures called *The Signs of the Variac*."

"Zodiac," I murmured.

"Eh?"

"Zodiac. Signs of the Zodiac."

"You're a pretty smart bloke, aren't you?" said the Sailor.

"No, no," I blushed modestly. "It's just that I like accuracy."

"Mebbe you'd better spin this bender," said the Big Sailor, making preparations to go. "You seem to know more about it than I do."

It took me five minutes and a couple of pints to appease him, and on the promise of no further interruptions, he resumed his yarn.

"Well, Knocker's face grew longer with each page he turned, and honest, my heart bled for him."

"Chocker, Knocker?" I asked.

"Just glum, chum," he said. "I've been working out the price of this blasted book in pints, and just to imagine it makes me feel thirsty. I can think of only one use for a book like this—hello, what have we got here?"

"I looked over his shoulder to see what was exciting his interest. No wonder his eyes gleamed, here was something for nothing."

"On the back page was an advert: 'TO THE PURCHASER OF THIS BOOK.—Madam Astro, the renowned astrologer invites you to send for your horoscope,

FREE. Write your name and address and date of birth. Enclose 2½d. stamp.

"'I'm going to have a basinful of this,' said Knocker. 'It'll be a laugh if nothing else.'

"A week later Knocker's horrorscope arrived. Together we went into the 'Golden Fleece' to give it the once over.

"What Madame Astro didn't know about Knocker could have been written on a threepenny bit with a broomstick dipped in tar.

"*'You are generous to a fault but careful withal,' it ran. 'Like all those born under Aquarius you are inclined to be reckless with a penchant for getting into minor scrapes.'*

"'What's a penchant?' asked Knocker, breaking off for a moment. 'I thought it was one of them things Judies have round their necks. Never mind it now, we'll ask the schoolie when we get back aboard.'

"He continued reading. *'You must make an effort to curb your generosity lest those near to you use it to their own advantage.'*

"Breaking off again he looked hard at me. 'Looks as if this Jane has got you pegged as well,' he grinned.

"*'As to your immediate future. You will make a journey, short on the face of it, but actually lengthy. As a result of this journey, you will get in touch with two colleagues whose action will decide your future movements. After this you will spend a short period away from your usual haunts. At the hour of your birth, Mars was in the ascendant, Neptune was in opposition, and Murphy was in gaol. This indicates that you will marry a wealthy widow. May the stars in their course protect you.'*

"'I like that bit about the stars protecting me,' said Knocker as we came into the fresh air. 'Makes me feel sort of safe.'

"'Well, they'd better start now,' I said. 'Here comes the patrol, and one of them's pointing his finger at you.'"

Here the Big Sailor paused and absentmindedly tried to take a drink from his empty glass. I made a sign to Flossie, and only when it had been replenished did he become aware of his whereabouts.

"You see," he said, "the first part of the future had already taken place. The day before Madam Astro's letter arrived, Knocker had travelled from Waterloo to Portsmouth on a ticket marked 'Surbiton.' His usual dodge of getting in the middle of a crowd failed, and the railway police took his name. The two colleagues mentioned were the two patrolmen who grabbed him outside the 'Golden Fleece.' They decided his future movements all right, by locking him in the guardroom at the barracks for the night.

"The Captain took a dim view of Knocker's misdeeds, and he was charged with conduct to the prejudice of good order and naval discipline, and defrauding the British Railways (Southern Region). Knocker got seven days' cells, thus spending a short period away from his usual haunts, just like the horrorscope said."

The Big Sailor sighed deeply, and the tears which had been gathering in his eyes rolled into his beer, turning it from weak to helpless.

"And where is Knocker now?" I asked compassionately, touched by his sorrow. "Still in the cells?"

"No. He spends all his time dressed in civies, hanging round the Queen's Hotel."

"The Queen's Hotel?" I gasped. That's a bit of a change from the 'Golden Fleece.' Why the Queen's Hotel?"

"Where else," he demanded, "would Knocker find a wealthy widow?"

EATON.

## BRING ME MY BOW

In this atomic age flag signalling is regarded by many people as an out-of-date and unnecessary system of communication. Before we return all flags to the Naval Store we should consider a few points in favour of signalling by flags.

Senior officers are appointed to our Fleet to exercise their command over the various units of the Fleet. The medium through which this command is largely exercised is Communications.

The senior officer has at his disposal for communication apparatus of great complexity that makes use of the ether. Should, however, the enemy elect to use the ether and intercept our commands or, by jamming, interfere with the transmission of commands, then the ether systems tend to fall from favour. For a period their use may be forbidden. Flag signalling is not subject to interception or interference from the enemy until action is joined.

The transmission and reception of a command over the ether depend upon the efficiency of apparatus and high efficiency of operators. The high efficiency of operators may be difficult to maintain under the strain of war. Flag signalling may be observed and even interpreted by any of the bridge personnel.

A transmission tends to monopolise the ether and an unnecessary transmission may delay a more important one. Flag signalling provides, in daylight, a senior officer with an ever-available interference-free system of exercising his command. In certain circumstances this may well be the quickest and most reliable method.

Flag signalling therefore should be regarded as a separate system of communication that has by no means outlived its usefulness.

FLAGON,



# ROUND THE HOME ESTABLISHMENTS

## HOME AIR COMMAND

The Ground Training Sub-Command came into being towards the end of January this year. Our object is the co-ordination of training for all naval personnel other than aircrew, and with this in view we have six air stations and establishments in our Sub-Command. Very briefly here is a list, and roughly what goes on at each station:

*Arbroath*.—Training of air apprentices and aircraft mechanics.

*Bramcote*.—Initial technical training for naval airmen mechanics (airframes) and (engines), and naval airmen new entry airmanship.

*Yeovilton*.—Advanced and higher technical training for naval airmen mechanics (A) and (E) and (O) (for Ordnance).

*Gosport*.—Schools of aircraft handling and safety equipment.

*Ford*.—School of Photography.

*Naval Air Signal School*.—The School, but not the task, is administered by Flag Officer, Ground Training.

*H.M.S. "Ariel"*.—Air Electrical Establishment.

The last-named place is near Warrington and is the equivalent of *Collingwood* for air matters. They do the technical training in air electrics and air and ground radio; the intention is that air radio ratings shall take over the maintenance of the ground radio equipment fitted at air stations.

At ground training airfields the signal and telegraphist staffs are nearly all W.R.N.S., and because there is not always a great deal of flying at this type of station, we endeavour to get as much practice as possible in H.F., Voice and D/F. Practice in the latter is most important. It is a miserable feeling to be airborne, and under the impression that you are getting a homing to an airfield, and you find you are actually disappearing over England on reciprocal bearings! (Personal experience!)

Witex is a great help to the Southern Area air stations, especially now that the cryptography has increased. The Northern Area air stations have their own exercises which roughly correspond to Witex.

The only other new thing as regards complements is the appointment to Arbroath of a W.R.N.S. Signal Officer in charge of the Communications Department.

The first course of the Telegraphists (Flying) started their training in September and they should be ready to begin their duties with second-line squadrons at the end of November. I believe the number of telegraphists who opted to become intrepid aviators greatly exceeded the demand for this new temporary category.

There have been few trials taking place in the past quarter that concern communications. However, one of the sets that has been proved to a certain extent is the S.T.R.11 (fitted in a Firefly). The main

attraction of this set from the operator's point of view is the fact that it is considerably easier to work than previous sets. So far it has given good results on H.F. voice.

A change that is taking place on 1st November in the V.H.F. sets at home is the reallocation of the buttons, and the increase of V.H.F. frequencies carried in aircraft, brought about by the introduction of the R.A.F. eight-channel V.H.F. set. The Navy is not fitting this set, as we are waiting to fit two ten-channel sets in the fairly near future. It has, however, meant a reorganisation, and the new "A," "B," "C" and "D" channels will help the newcomers to learn their use because:

A—is Airfield Control.

B—is Naval Air Command (cross-country).

C—is Operational and Training.

D—is Distress and Flight Service.

From switching on his set until he's in trouble—straight through "A," "B," "C" and "D"! (I am explaining Flight Service later in the article.)

The four other channels used by the R.A.F. (in their eight-channel set) are used as follows: three for Command Allocation, and one for Flight Service. The Flight Service on the eight-channel set is a different frequency from the R.N./R.A.F. Distress and Flight Service used by four-channel aircraft.

In the past few months we have been expecting to see the "R.N./R.A.F. Flight Service and Distress Organisation" Plan. This has now been issued and, very briefly, I will endeavour to explain what it means.

Coming into force on 1st January, 1950, is an improved Air Traffic Control Network for Teleprinter, V.H.F. and H.F., as well as improved availability of information for aircraft in the air.

As you probably know, the United Kingdom is divided into five Flight Information Regions (F.I.R.), and each of these regions has an Air Traffic Control Centre (A.T.C.C.) (Inverness, Prestwick, Preston, Gloucester and Uxbridge).

These centres know the flight plan of all radio-fitted aircraft airborne in their region (other than local flights), and have in their possession all air navigation information; this latter they sift and pass on to all airfields in their region. They also have complete and up-to-date meteorological data for all regions.

You will have seen already that V.H.F. fitted aircraft will not always be in touch with the Air Traffic Control Centre of the region in which they are flying, due to their heights and distances. So as to overcome this difficulty a voice link is provided by specially selected airfields in each region. The latter are, in most cases, master airfields (i.e., airfields that are open all the time).

Having provided over-all communications for V.H.F. we come to this "Flight Service" Organisation. This has been brought about in order that Service

aircraft on passage that are fitted only with V.H.F. may communicate either direct or indirect with an A.T.C.C. and obtain navigational and other vital information from the Civilian Air Traffic Organisation. There is also an H.F. Flight Service corresponding to V.H.F. and it is worked on each individual F.I.R.'s day or night frequency. For aircraft flying over more than one F.I.R. there is a common H.F. frequency allocation, one to all Northern A.T.C.C.; the other to all Southern A.T.C.C.

For V.H.F. Distress there is an international frequency, and another one for R.N. and R.A.F. four-channel aircraft. The latter have this special frequency because they share it with the Flight Service as well. For H.F. distress there is a separate day and night frequency, as well as a complete H.F. D/F "Fixer" service manned all the time.

This is a pretty complete organisation, but owing to the large amount of traffic on V.H.F. it is obvious that it will only work *provided* that the correct voice procedure is used!

Should you want to study this network in more detail it is laid down in A.F.O. 3400/49, and in part in S.160/49. It may seem difficult when read through for the first time, and I think you will find that you will have to go through it two or three times to really hoist it in.

I hope this article will have been of some use to those foreign to the Air Command, and they have seen a little of what goes on!

### R.N.A.S., CULDROSE

Articles on the Home Air Command and Flying Training Command having set the ball rolling on matters of naval aviation, it might be of interest to give an account of the history and activities of an individual, and incidentally our latest, naval air station.

We are situated down in West Cornwall at the head of the Lizard Peninsula, about two miles out of Helston on the main Lizard road which runs between the airfield and the living quarters. Penzance lies about fifteen miles to the west and Falmouth some nine miles to the north-east, while the Helford River, apart from providing us with beautiful scenery and most pleasant sailing facilities, acts as an excellent guide to the normal duty runway.

Much to the annoyance of the local inhabitants, perennial visitors, and Mr. Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald, and particularly the farmers who were to lose a vast amount of arable land, plans were laid in 1942 for the building of this aerodrome as a naval air station. After a lengthy process of levelling out valleys and hills, and the complete demolition of two or three farms, one of which was called Culdrose, it finally commissioned as H.M.S. *Seahawk* in April, 1947. The first training squadron took up residence in July of that year, and today we are a hive of activity with eight squadrons in all.

Our training task is as varied as it is active. At the time of going to press we have four resident squadrons with particular training commitments:

- (1) The Instrument Flying Squadron use Oxford aircraft to train pilots in bad-weather flying.
- (2) The Twin-Conversion Squadron use Oxfords and Mosquitoes to train pilots to fly light and heavy twin-engined aircraft respectively.
- (3) A Mosquito Squadron provides aircraft to operate with R.N.A.D.C., Kete, for the training of N.D. officers.
- (4) The Naval Night Fighter School use Fireflies and Anson classrooms for the training of night fighter crews.



Wrens at Culdrose

In addition there is a first-line night fighter squadron of two-seater Sea Hornets working up prior to embarking in a carrier: a jet evaluation and conversion squadron consisting of Vampires and Meteors; and finally we are the parent air station for the 15th Carrier Air Group, consisting of two squadrons, Sea Furies and Fireflies, who have recently been undergoing intensive training before embarking in their parent ship, *Vengeance*, for the autumn cruise.

This enormous variety of types of aircraft employed on the station gives some idea of the size and complexity of the stores organisation, which is only outvalled by the intensity of the Supply Officer (Stores)'s headache.

We are an "all-weather" station—that is to say, the normal flying hours are 0800 to sunset or 1800, whichever is the earlier, 0800 to 1200 on Saturdays, closed on Sundays, though it seldom works out that way at week-ends in the summer when aircraft are in constant demand for air displays, A.T.C. flying,



trials units, etc. During flying hours we have to maintain voice and D/F watch on the Naval Air Command Guard, irrespective of whether flying is taking place or not. Each squadron has its own training frequency which requires a voice operator in the C.R.R. in the control tower whenever any of its aircraft are exercising, and we have to be prepared to lay on H.F. W/T frequencies from time to time for Ship-NAS or Aircraft Carrier Wave purposes whenever any ships or rescue motor launches are exercising with aircraft in the vicinity. On these occasions we can also provide an H.F. voice telephone link.

We also maintain loud-speaker watch on the distress frequency, with a transmitter available if required, and in connection with this, all crash tenders and ambulances are fitted with H.F. voice for communication with Air Traffic Control.

In addition to normal day flying, night flying takes place three nights a week—weather and serviceability permitting—when the Twin Conversion Unit, Night Fighter School, Night Fighter Squadron, and Jet Squadron are regular customers. This lasts from two to four hours and starts as soon as practicable after sunset. Consequently it seldom starts before 2300 in mid-summer, much to the annoyance of the local population, some of whom are quick to ring up the Captain personally with complaints of low-flying aircraft. Even in the forenoon a local businessman has rung up Air Traffic Control and asked them to change the runway, as he has found it difficult to add up his figures.

A watch generally consists of six to eight operators in the C.R.R. in the control tower, two at the outlying transmitters, one at the outlying receivers, and two at the V.H.F. D/F. Consequently the problem of providing operators almost on a round-the-clock flying programme is one that needs constant attention.

It will be seen from this that our communication commitments are fairly extensive, and to meet them the Sparkers' Union consists mainly of Wren Telegraphists, with a few senior male ratings in charge, although the leading hands in charge of the C.R.R. watches are Wrens. We also take part in the weekly inter-naval air stations W/T exercise on Wednesday forenoons, Witex on either Tuesdays or Thursday, and a private buzzer exercise with our neighbouring naval air station at St. Merryn on each remaining forenoon.

From the equipment point of view we are the only naval air station fitted with S.S.C.S.—Shore Station Control System. Very briefly this is a system which enables outlying transmitters and receivers, sited about a mile apart, and both over a mile from the control tower, to be remotely controlled from a variety of positions. These positions are the C.R.R. in the control tower, the Air Traffic Control officer's desk, the air watch office, the operations room, and the A.D.R. at our outlying radar site about three miles away on the coast. The transmitters employed

are 87's, 617's and 610's, while local airfield control is carried out with 86's, and receivers are P104's and B40's.

The usual homing aids are available—the YG beacon, AH6 for H.F. D/F (the latter being manned "by arrangement" only), and FV4. The FV4, however, is too slow for jet aircraft in the final stages of approach when snap bearings are essential, and we have therefore been provided with a mobile FV5 which is sited between the intersection of the two most used runways, with its repeater beside the plot in the Air Traffic Control room.

The primary object of our radar station, situated on the coast at Gunwalloe about three miles away, is the training of night-fighter crews in night interception, but we find their reports invaluable for checking D/F bearings and guiding aircraft into the safety approach lanes during typical Cornish "clamps." The equipment, controlled by direction officers, consists of a Type 277 and a Type 277T modified to give the same results as the A.M.E.S.14, and between them they give complete coverage up to 26,000 feet to a depth of thirty miles.

Apart from our normal training task, we find ourselves, by reason of our geographical position, intimately bound up with the majority of major exercises carried out by the Home Fleet. During the past eighteen months we have been called on to operate our own first- and second-line squadrons and visiting R.A.F. fighter squadrons for Exercises "Hawker," "One-step," "Sunrise" and "Verity." These exercises have been responsible for visits from several V.I.P.s., including Field-Marshal Montgomery and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, both of whose aircraft arrived in the circuit at the same time. The former was asked politely to wait until the latter, piloting his own Dakota (exemplary at voice procedure!), was cleared from the airfield. The duty Wren Telegraphist hit the headlines in the national Press next day as having "told Monty to 'get back in the queue,'" which later earned for her a letter of admiration from a lonely young American in Philadelphia!

No account of our activities from the Communications aspect would be complete without mentioning that the M.S.O. with all the complications of distribution associated with a naval air station and the telephone exchange are complemented with Wren signal and Wren switchboard operators.

## NAVAL AIR SIGNAL SCHOOL

With the June promotions came a double honour to us—both the Officer-in-Charge and the First Lieutenant; our heartiest congratulations go out to both. The former, Captain Jameson, is staying on as Captain-in-Charge of both the Air Signal School and also the Naval Air Station at Lee. The latter Cdr. Kennard, has now left us to take up a new appointment as F.C.O. at Singapore. We wish him the best of luck and hope that his tropical garden

will compare favourably with his cabbage patch at Fareham!

Our new Chief Instructor and First Lieutenant, Lt. Cdr. Phillimore, has settled in and has already planned, and put into operation, what promises to be an ideal hunting ground for mushrooms a year hence. This has been accomplished by demolishing part of what remained of the old burnt-out Ward-room, levelling the ground, sowing grass seed and planting bushes and flowers.

As late as the beginning of September we were on "tenter-hooks," not knowing what the future of the Naval Air Signal School was going to be. Up to then, we had been preparing to take up to sixty Special Entry Midshipmen at the rate of up to twenty every three months, starting in October, and to call ourselves the Observers' School. However, this was not to be, but instead the training of Observer Midshipmen was to be conducted on a "split" course of three months' air communications at Seafeld Park, followed by six months' navigation at St. Merryn. We accordingly started No. 1 Observer Course of Midshipmen on 13th October and at about the same time started the first course of General Service Tels. who have volunteered as "Telegraphists (Flying)" for two years. Our courses for this new category are of four weeks' duration.

Our junior ratings' ablutions are experiencing a major upheaval in the shape of modernisation, taking about two months to complete. We hope that by the time these notes are in print the new bathrooms, etc., will be completed.

The last course of Aircrewmen, No. 11, is now undergoing training and will complete at the beginning of December.

The D/F huts have acquired the "new look" and provide a becoming background to the playing fields. May we once again use THE COMMUNICATOR to advertise our D/F instruction (A.F.O. 27/49)? We offer pleasant surroundings, good recreation, which will almost be forced upon you, as thorough a D/F training as is possible, and a quiet atmosphere for study.

Radio Olympia was honoured by a visit from representatives of the staff and courses at the Naval Air Signal School. Judging by the remarks passed over a little refreshment at a pub. somewhere between London and Hillhead, your correspondent feels bound to report that we were not too favourably impressed by the show and had hoped for something much more impressive and instructive.

Finally, may we extend our warmest greetings and best wishes to all Aviators and Communicators for the coming season and the New Year?

## COMBINED SIGNAL SCHOOL

The sunshine having given way at last to the inevitable mist, rain and mud of the West Country, we can now look back and review the past few months. Now that the days are shortening and our manifold exercises are temporarily at a standstill, we find time

to write a few enlightening words to you other Communicators.

### Work before Pleasure

With a considerable number of courses passing through this term, good results have been obtained, which were gratifying to all concerned. The spirit of "Combined Operations" in the Signal world has been strengthened by the three Services visiting us. Each in his own way, especially noted during the evening canteen hours and through our special "zyder," became more and more combined in his outlook. Not that we haven't had our peculiarities and personalities! On more than one occasion the Devon hills were shocked to see sailors without their ships "footslogging" the countryside. "Loud and clear but distorted" was on one occasion echoed by one of our friends—no names!

Our L.C.H. (Landing Craft Headquarters) has journeyed not only into the Far North and Ireland, but was also the mainstay of Exercise "Camberley" at Portsmouth. Here again all three Services formed members of the ship's signal staff with excellent results. Although local weather in Dundrum Bay prevented the assault in Exercise "Tangible," communications throughout were highly successful, proving that all Services can work together under trying conditions. Our R.M. signal detachment was again in evidence, as, apart from the N.B.S.S. (Naval Beach Signal Section), operations were also provided for the F.O.B., Seafox and Loch Fads.

It was unfortunate that our "new look" in the form of "Jersey cream" coloured paint, which now graces our camp buildings, did not arrive in time to enhance our King's Birthday Parade. In consultation with our R.S.M. and pace-stick, our hybrid contingent managed to march past to the strains of music provided with great ingenuity by the Signal School.

August 27th saw us competing in the Combined Operations Centre Inter-Unit Sports. Here we will draw a rather dark veil! The darkness was pierced by a bright ray in the form of the tug-of-war, in which we certainly had to pull our weight to win. After a tie between C.O.X.E. (Combined Operations Experimental Establishment), Wading Trials Branch and ourselves, the Cricket Shield now proudly hangs in our canteen.

October is rather a sad month for us. Many of our staff are leaving or have left, some without reliefs. Coupled with the man-power shortage, this has given us "food for thought" until the New Year.

Best wishes from the C.S.S. go out to all who have passed through our guiding hands; a happy Christmas to all Communicators wherever they may be.

F. A. N. A.

## R.N.S.S., DEVONPORT

Since the Summer issue we have had a new Officer-in-Charge. To Lt. Cdr. Phillimore we say "au revoir," thanks for all you did for us and the very best of



luck and happiness in your new appointment." We offer a warm welcome to Lt. Cdr. Mason and hope his term of office will be marked with success and that his stay in the West Country will be happy.

At the time of writing, the *Amethyst* is just securing alongside No. 6 Wharf. It is most pleasing that in the outstanding exploits of this ship a member of the Communication Branch should have merited such distinction for devotion to duty.

Navy Days during August, in spite of adverse weather, were marked by the usual popularity and success. The message greetings radio/postagrams were as popular as ever, and netted a reasonable financial turnover. On this occasion the general public was given an added variety by seeing some of their messages transmitted by Pakistan and turbaned R.I.N. Communication ratings. This supplementing of R.N. by Dominion personnel was made necessary by the acute shortage of man power.

The numbers in our Leading Telegraphist and Leading Signalmen Qualifying Courses have increased of late, but unfortunately owing to the same old trouble, man power, it is found very difficult, almost impossible, to keep other ratings long enough to get a good course of typing, crypto, new signal books, etc., into them.

The Establishment did very well at cricket and succeeded in remaining at the top of the R.N. Barracks Inter-Divisional League throughout the season. It is hoped to emulate this achievement

throughout the current soccer season. However, owing to the drafting of two stalwarts, Tel. Thompson and O./Sig. Fisher, it will be an even greater achievement if we succeed.

In conclusion, our best wishes to all Communicators, especially those of the West Country Division, for a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

A. E. B.

## R.N.S.S., COOKHAM CAMP

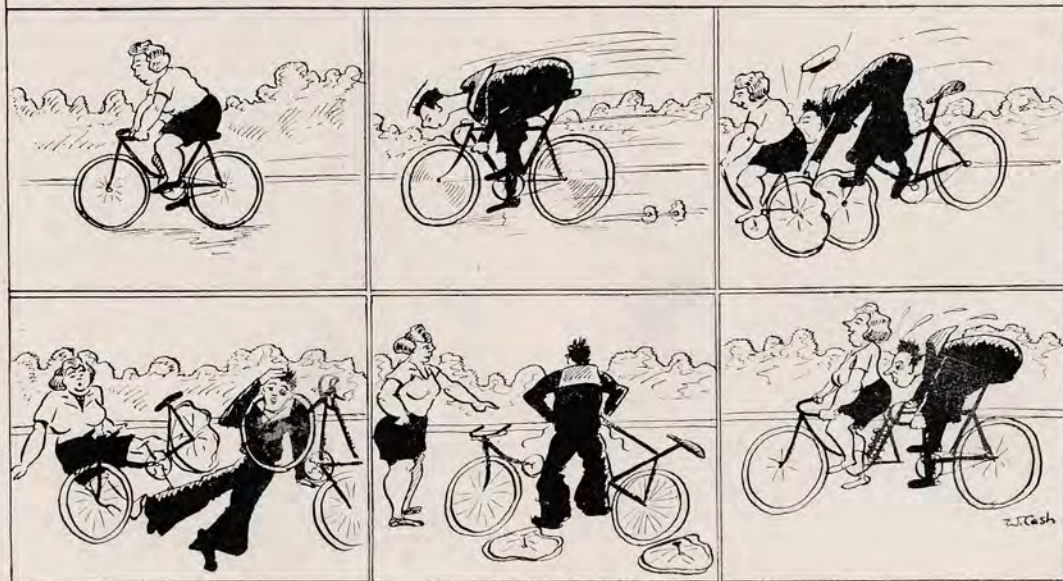
Those of you who know Cookham at its worst will appreciate it when I tell you that this is being typed out to the accompaniment of rain on the roof—just like an old-fashioned melodrama . . . "Outside the rain falls ceaselessly." Oilskins and seaboots are the rig, whilst trainee and pensioner vie with each other to collect the chestnuts.

### Training

We reached our peak figures of new entry trainees in November, when the total number was about 480. This figure will fall rapidly after Christmas and we expect to have only 200 left by March, 1950. Rumour has it that next June all the new entry training will be absorbed elsewhere and that Chatham Signal School will revert to purely Depot Signal School as of yore. (For the information of the older hands, the loft in the old R.N.B. School will *not* be available.)

Of our total number of trainees, well over half are National Service ratings, and the first three classes

## JACK'S THE BOY



of V/S ratings have passed out after twenty-four weeks here and have all gone to sea immediately on completion of their course. This, we consider, is a good thing, as their course was designed to be followed by a period of consolidation at sea. The first N.S. W/T class will complete immediately after Christmas and it is hoped to send them straight to sea also.

It appears that both the S.S. and N.S. entries are being drastically reduced and that is the reason why we shall have so few trainees next spring.

It has been gratifying to see the keenness with which the National Service ratings have tackled their training, and classes who have passed out to date have all done well.

Our movement to another establishment nearer the sea has fallen through and so it has been necessary to resort to other methods in order to let the trainees see the sea. The present arrangement is that half-way through their course classes are sent to the Nore Flotilla for one week's sea experience, and training is continued by communication exercises with Cookham from the ships.

Many instructors have now joined from the other two depots and we take this opportunity of recording our pleasure at seeing them.

The Christmas Term Inter-Divisional Competition has just been completed after a see-saw struggle culminating in a cross-country race in which the winners would also win the competition itself, so level were all on points. Old Quarterdeck ratings will be glad to hear that the cup was retained by "E" Area.

The Annual Sports Day was a great success with an Athletic Cup for the winning division. Top Division won this by only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  points and they will agree that their thanks are due to the chief of another division who dropped his baton (bless his bonny socks).

This was followed by an athletic meeting with our neighbours, the Borstal Institution, which Cookham won comfortably. Borstal kindly provided a shield on which was inscribed the years up to 1959—somewhat optimistic in view of our possible closing down—but we hope to repeat the fixture in future years if only with a depot pool.

Thanks to the kindness of the local Mathematical School and to Borstal in loaning us some of their grounds, we are able to get in plenty of soccer, rugger and hockey.

We run two XIs in the Chatham and Mid-Kent League and in each division we were top until recently, when with much-weakened teams owing to injuries and drafts we slid to second place in both divisions. Now that our injured have recovered, we are fully confident of regaining our rightful place.

We also have pleasure in recording that Cookham has won the R.N.B. Inter-Block Shield, defeating Writers and Supply very decisively by 6 goals to 1 and thus avenging the defeat of our second team in this competition, who were beaten in the replay of the semi-final after extra time.

The final provided grand football. Everyone played

so well that it would be unfair to single out individuals for special mention, except that, as all will agree, P.O. Tel. Joblin (recently transferred from Leydene F.C.) was an inspiration to the remainder. Thank you, Queen Mother!

It must be understood that soccer is not confined to the two camp teams. We have a Camp League running in which are entered no fewer than fourteen teams. The league leaders to date are Quarterdeck "A," but this is nicely balanced by the fact that the leader in reverse is Quarterdeck "C."

The Wardroom team sadly miss four of their last season stalwarts in Messrs. Chatten, Greet, White and Payne, who were placed on the free transfer list by their Lordships. Mr. Chatten, no doubt, is by now, managing director of the Med. Destroyer team.

All those who have served at Cookham will appreciate this answer to a question on a test paper:

Q.: Name three things you would expect to find in S1.

A.: Desks, blackboard and cupboard.

Also heard on the touchline from an embittered Instructor: "Use your head—that's all it's fit for!"

In conclusion, on behalf of all at Cookham, here's wishing all Communicators the happiest possible Christmas and good fortune in the New Year.

### Club Gossip

Most of you will be glad to know that not many "stanchions" have been uprooted since the last issue of THE COMMUNICATOR. The cries of "Up, the Blues," and "Y'ere Jan," still make the foreigners heard at the bar and over the billiard table.

C.P.O. Tels. Risdale and "Nutty" Campbell have departed to that paradise of five-day weeks and no duty week-ends, i.e., "Civvy Street." C.P.O. Tel. Ross is shortly following C.Y.S. Brader to the *Chequers*. Teddy Carlow has gone to the *Pelican* and Harry Hemsley all the way to Nore W/T (with no draft leave). C.Y.S. Bob Webb was successfully married off and then sent to the *Diadem*.

The C. and P.Os.' Club held four very successful socials during the summer.

On 22nd September we entertained the Whitehall W/T to a not very serious cricket match, followed by much more serious drinking.

"Clubs" Atherton also brought his local Dagenham Club down to play us football (which we didn't win) and we had a marvellous time at the return social at Dagenham.

We are busy planning our winter activities and hope that any lonely "foreigners" around Chatham will look us up both on these occasions and at any other time.

C.Y.S. "Soapy" Watson is, of course, still reigning supreme as President. After all, who else could look back on so many years of experience in clubs and canteens, from Chatham to Yokohama?

To all old friends and Communicators we send our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

COOKHAM FRY.



## H.M.S. "GANGES"

As autumn draws on, the leaves pile up into the main entrance of the Signal School. As we begin to look forward to the Christmas festivities, let us cast our minds back to see what we have accomplished since the last edition of THE COMMUNICATOR.

H.M.S. *Bruce* has closed down and H.M.S. *Ganges* is now the sole establishment engaged in training Communication Boys. A great pity—we shall miss the friendly rivalry, and the inevitable argument whether *Bruce* or *Ganges* produced the better Communication Boy.

The first Boys to complete the new thirty-five-week course have been drafted to sea, but it is still difficult to say whether we are producing a more efficient Boy under the new conditions. Results are satisfactory so far, but there are a number of factors which may affect the quality of output. Although the Communication Course is actually more extensive, it is rather more concentrated, and there has been a considerable reduction in the "leavening" of seamanship, field training and P.T. But the principal factor remains, as always, the quality of the Instructor.

We hope that senior Communicators will not neglect the Boys' training at sea, or the greater part of our work will be wasted. The training of Boys is hard work, but to see a class in their final week Morse typing at 22 w.p.m. is ample compensation, to say the least, for one's efforts. In any case, we should be glad to hear your comments—good or bad—on the results as you find them.

Boys are boys the world over, and when looking at them it is rather difficult at times to cast one's mind back and say, "Was I different as a boy?" or "Would I have tried as hard—or harder?" These thoughts must occur to every Officer or Instructor who has been fortunate (the previous word is not a misprint) enough to train boys.

The modernisation of the Signal School is proceeding slowly, hampered mainly by the man-power situation, but we are hoping that the following incident will not be repeated. An ex-C.P.O. Tel., an official who is now employed in a civilian capacity, had cause to visit *Ganges* in connection with his work. Looking into the classrooms, he said: "The place hasn't changed since I was a boy here in 1924." Looking closely at one of the walls, and being questioned as to whether he was interested in interior decorating, etc., he casually replied: "Oh, no, I was just looking to see if the mark my head made, when knocked against the wall by the Instructor, was still there."

We do not train Boys that way now, but try to regard each Boy as an individual, and try to understand his problems. Provided he co-operates, I am sure we accomplish more by this method. Life at *Ganges*, especially in the Signal School, provides its humorous moments. We have met the individual who, endeavouring to improve his somewhat limited knowledge of W/T organisation, was mystified to

find that we utilised a port wave, but where the dickens was the starboard wave? Also the Boy who thought "W.M.P." was the abbreviation for "Women's Military Police," and another who identified it as "Will Mail Parcel."

We were very sorry to say good-bye to Lt. Cdr. Bray on his relief by Lt. Paterson, and we wish him the best of luck on the Staff Course.

To old *Ganges* Boys the School layout is very much the same. The "Buntings" still read flashing in the Long Covered Way, but the Signal Tower veterans still say: "It was never like this in my time."

To you all, wherever you may be, we wish you a merry Christmas and the best of luck in 1950.

## WHO HELPED YOU?

It would be interesting to know just how the average senior Communication rating views the prospect of a job at a boys' training establishment. There seems to be quite a strong consensus of opinion that an Instructor's job is a queer mixture of gunner's mate, regulating petty officer, P.T. and W. instructor, seaman petty officer, schoolmistress and wet nurse—in fact, everything bar Signal or Wireless Instructor—and a job to be avoided at all costs.

This is, of course, partly true—there's never smoke without fire—but it is worth considering the other side of the story.

We are dealing with youngsters straight from civil life, from every conceivable form of background, at a very impressionable age. Their first Instructor has an arduous responsibility. There is no doubt that his influence determines to a considerable extent the Boy's future attitude to the Service, and to life as a whole. His influence may make or mar a Boy's character. It is astonishing to see the difference in results, both domestically and professionally, that lie between two groups of Boys, one taken by an average and the other by an outstanding Instructor.

A frightening responsibility? Possibly. Certainly not the job for a Yeoman or P.O. Telegraphist? I don't agree.

No senior Communication rating worth his salt, who is professionally competent and confident, and who has defined his own ideals and aims, should be in the least reluctant to accept it. Anyone who has, in full measure, the qualities required of a chief petty officer, petty officer or leading hand should have no fear of fostering them in his juniors, by reason of his example. Should not one of the primary aims in life be to acquire knowledge not only for the proper performance of one's professional task but also to impart it to others, so that by our learning and experience others may profit?

A really competent Communication Instructor will take the domestic side of his duties in such an establishment well in his stride. He has the chance of making a satisfying and valuable contribution to the Service and to the individual Boy—the benefits of his own experience, character and ability.

Who helped you?

# ROUND THE HOME FLEET

## HOME FLEET NOTES

"'Turn Uncle' flying in the leading M.L." The Fleet Flagship was moving quietly down the fjord on a hot summer afternoon after spending a very enjoyable but hectic week in Oslo. A peaceful scene with the ship alone except for four Norwegian M.Ls., who were doing us the honour of escorting us out of harbour. The tranquillity was interrupted by a stentorian report on the V/S intercom.

Glasses were hastily redirected to confirm that these were in fact flying, but the association of that particular pair could only mean one thing: "Order One"; and so it was, as within a short space of time the signal was hauled down and the M.Ls. formed single line ahead. Other old favourites followed all the way down the fjord; a small incident but one of interest in a world of Atlantic Pacts and Western Unions.

The Fleet reassembled at the end of June at Penzance for Exercise "Verity," preparations for which had occupied communication staffs of the Home Fleet in one way or another for most of the cruise.

In this exercise a large number of liaison parties, consisting almost entirely of the Communication Branch, had to be formed for loan to French, Dutch and Belgian ships and shore headquarters: these were provided by *Mercury*, Cookham and Vicarage Road, who somehow managed to produce the large number of bodies required.

The Combined Fleets, consisting of some fifty ships, were at Penzance late p.m. on 30th June until early on Monday, 4th July. This allowed three days for a very intensive communication exercise programme.

Exercise "Verity" was principally a convoy exercise with the submarines as the main enemy, who were aided and abetted by reconnaissance aircraft from Coastal Command and France, and in the closing stages by Bomber Command, Naval Air Command and M.T.Bs. from *Hornet*. Other Coastal Command and French maritime aircraft were also operating in support of the convoy against the submarines; and Fighter Command aircraft were available to defend the convoy when in the Channel.

While the convoy was at sea, Allied minesweepers were busily engaged in training at Portland, and on the final morning swept a channel through which the main units of the Combined Fleet passed prior to entering harbour.

Some of the points which may be of general interest were:

- (a) Plain language signals were made in English. Fortunately for us, English was the only language which was mutually satisfactory to all nations.
- (b) Flag signalling has many advantages on such occasions.

(c) Voice worked surprisingly well; the language problem was much simpler when "groups," as opposed to plain language, were employed.

(d) The very great enthusiasm displayed by all forces taking part.

It is not too much to say that the exercise was primarily a test of communications, and showed beyond doubt that Western Union forces can work together.

It should not be forgotten that however much the navies of associated nations wish to co-operate they can only do so in a tactical role provided that they can communicate. It seems likely that more and more of such co-operation will be required.

At present, and probably for the next few years, small liaison parties will be required for communication purposes; this means that at any time young signalmen or telegraphists may well find themselves lent for a period of days or weeks to a ship of another nation; they may well be on their own, and will be expected not only to answer questions on their own subjects but will be considered an authority on many matters. The Command Organisation (including the R.A.F.) for the exercise, when plot waves are manned, where libertymen are landed, are typical of the sort of questions that may be asked.

A formidable number of Pressmen were embarked for this exercise, as it was desired to give it the maximum amount of publicity. A very heavy volume of traffic was cleared, mostly by *Maidstone* working at high speed with Burnham, who gave us excellent co-operation.

Unfortunately the exercise coincided with a dollar crisis, and only a comparatively small percentage of the stories transmitted were published.

*Agincourt* had a B.B.C. representative on board, and his live broadcast from the ship went over "loud and clear" (a good tribute to the 600 series).

The Fleet sailed for the autumn cruise early in September and spent six weeks at Invorgordon carrying out an intensive training programme which included a week's visit by the Netherlands cruiser *Heemskerk* and three Norwegian destroyers.

The *Vengeance*, who has replaced *Theseus* as flagship of A.C.3. and the 4th Destroyer Flotilla, left us at the end of September for Londonderry, while the remainder of the Fleet visited Rosyth.

We are about to assemble at Lamlash for a large-scale convoy exercise in the Atlantic and return to home ports on 21st November.

We take this opportunity of wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and good fortune in 1950.

## H.M.S. "ILLUSTRIOUS"

Readers might be interested in the following details of a Heath Robinson direction finder which assisted in locating the steamer *Yew Park* in distress off the Lizard late last October. When *Illustrious* arrived at



the distress position it looked like Piccadilly Circus during rush hour. Every ship which had been in the vicinity was there except the *Yew Park*. In spite of her rockets and our searchlight, nobody could determine her position. We were in good touch with her on 1650 Kc/s, but since we are not fitted with suitable D/F equipment we could not get a bearing of her, nor could we pick her up with radar.

The night was dark and stormy, as they say, and the *Yew Park* reported herself stopped with stokehold and engine room flooded. The *Illustrious* turned south and left Piccadilly Circus behind, since it was obvious that the *Yew Park* must be out of the regular traffic lane. Meanwhile the direction finder was being hurriedly constructed in the chart house by Commander (L), assisted by the Captain of Marines, the Mate of the Upper Deck, the Commander and various other willing helpers.

A frame aerial was wound using 20 SWG double silk-covered wire on a former consisting of a cross made out of two pieces of wood 2 inches by  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch by 18 inches long. These were tacked together at the centre to form a cross and a two-inch nail driven into each end of each arm round which was wound about eighteen turns of wire. The ends of the frame aerial were connected to a length of 70-ohm co-axial cable and this was connected to the low impedance input of a B28 in the B.W.O., the outer screen of the co-axial being earthed at the receiver end. The rather fragile frame was then nailed to a piece of wood about 5 feet long to serve as a handle and taken with an extension pair of phones from the B28 on to the flag deck, where it was found possible, by rotating the frame aerial, to obtain a sharply defined "minimum" on the signal from the *Yew Park*. This placed her either on the port bow or the starboard quarter. No ambiguity of sense was possible, as we knew the *Yew Park* wasn't anywhere astern and also her strength of signals on 1650 Kc/s had been steadily increasing. Radar contact soon confirmed the bearing and in due course she saw our searchlight.

Communication on 1650 Kc/s was excellent with all stations, some as far afield as Seaforth, having to be silenced.

## "COLLINGWOOD" CALLING

In *Mercury*, gay *Mercury*,  
Remote, Arcadian spot,  
Where careless dash so gleefully  
Is linked with random dot,  
You told us all there was to know  
Regarding modern radio  
Except why sometimes it would go  
And often it would not.

In *Mercury*, glad *Mercury*,  
We saw the user's side.  
A pair of phones, a little key  
(And little else) implied  
That if the gentle student knew  
The way to get a signal through  
Within, perhaps, a week or two  
You all felt satisfied.

In *Mercury*, fond *Mercury*,  
You wanted, it would seem,  
To be for ever trouble-free  
And so evolved a scheme  
Whereby the snag-bound P.O. Tel.  
Would call on (L) Branch personnel—  
It seems a pity to dispel  
So beautiful a dream.

But, devotee of *Mercury*,  
We cannot guarantee  
Continuous efficiency  
Wherever you may be.  
With relays stuck and fuses blown,  
Unhelped, unguided and alone,  
You still may meet the vast Unknown—  
Especially at sea.

We quite agree, sweet *Mercury*,  
It would be simply grand  
If experts could eternally  
At zero notice stand,  
Alert and eager to assist  
To dissipate the mental mist  
Surrounding the telegraphist  
And lead him by the hand.

Though that may be, dear *Mercury*,  
What we are aiming at,  
And plans for such ubiquity  
Are kept beneath our hat,  
And though we fathom (as we should)  
The problems which no others could,  
And matters deep and dark which would  
Elsewhere be dimly understood  
Are crystal clear in *Collingwood*—  
Although, in short, we're pretty good  
We're not as good as that.

## SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**—1, Boscawen; 5, Armada; 10, Nevis; 11, Bonaparte; 12, Ows; 13, Strop; 14, Inch; 17, Beached; 18, Calais; 22, Astute; 23, Fox Cubs; 26, Post; 28, Doffs; 29, Emma; 32, Press Gang; 33, Turin; 34, Silver; 35, Starters.

**DOWN**—1, Benbow; 2, St. Vincent; 3, Also; 4, Embitter; 6, Rope; 7, Arran; 8, Amethyst; 9, Anson; 15, Scott; 16, March; 19, Albemarle; 20, Sam Pepys; 21, Dog Fight; 24, Coral; 25, Saints Ciral; 27, Shell; 30, Isle; 31, Star.

# WESTERN UNION

## EXERCISE "VERITY"

To the uninitiated, Exercise "Verity" would be classed as yet another exercise, but to those Communicators who took part it will be long remembered as an event of some importance.

The object of the exercise was to accustom Western Union naval forces to work together, especially in the defence of a convoy against submarine and air attacks, and also in the unenviable task of mine-sweeping.

The forces taking part were impressive. The French were to provide one light fleet carrier, three heavy cruisers, two light cruisers, six escorts, five submarines, eight minesweeping craft and one submarine depot ship; the Netherlands, one cruiser, one destroyer, two escort vessels, two submarines, seven minesweepers and one depot ship; and the Belgians, four minesweepers. British forces comprised the Home Fleet, the Training Squadron the 2nd Training Flotilla, the Nore Destroyer Flotilla, H.M.S. *Maidstone* and ten submarines, two minelayers, six minesweepers, four M/S M.L.s., eight M.T.B.s., H.M.S. *Boxer*, R.F.A. *Black Ranger* and R.F.A. *Fort Beauharnois*.

It was agreed that English should be the basic language and that British communication principles and methods should be used throughout. It was also agreed that small liaison teams should be provided in order to assist foreign communication staffs on voice waves and in the interpretation of British signal publications. It was not the intention that these teams should take over communications completely. Foreign Communicators were to be encouraged to learn and use our systems.

The communication problem was tackled in four main phases:

- (a) The outline and detailed planning and the provision of material.
- (b) The provision and training of liaison teams.
- (c) The training of foreign communication staffs immediately prior to the main phases of the exercise.
- (d) The progressive familiarisation of British communication systems during the exercise.

C.-in-C., Portsmouth, and C.-in-C., Home Fleet, were responsible for the over-all plan, which was hatched in detail by a small joint planning staff, known as the "Verity Planners," in a small, dusty room at the top of many flights of stairs in Old Building, Admiralty, Whitehall.

An outline communication plan was worked out during the Home Fleet spring cruise by the Squadron Communication Officer to Flag Officer, Training Squadron, and the final scheme produced by the Fleet Communication Officer to C.-in-C., Home Fleet, during the Easter leave period.

Few of our publications had so far been released to the foreign navies, and it was therefore necessary to include the complete fleet, station and convoy communication organisations in the exercise orders: these were, however, condensed in the interests of

simplicity into a standard organisation for the whole operation.

It was thought that provided we stuck to the phonetic alphabet and standard communication phrases it might be possible for French and Netherlands operators to compete on fleet wave after a short period of training. Voice waves with alternative C.W. channels were therefore planned.

Arrangements were made for sets of British flags and pendants and signal publications to be sent over to France, Holland and Belgium so that the foreign navies could do a bit of advance training.

Supplies of the necessary crystals for both aircraft and ships radio equipment were arranged. A proportion was carried over in a suitcase to Paris by one of the planning staff—lucky fellow.

A special call-sign pamphlet was produced and distributed to all concerned just in time to catch the last distribution before the exercise started.

Special fleet wave exercises were carried out in the Home Fleet to accustom operators to the reception of the probable French and Netherlands pronunciation of the phonetic alphabet. Midshipmen played the part of "broken English" operators with effect and enthusiasm, and a considerable initial dislocation of normal procedure.

The training of liaison teams began simultaneously at H.M.S. *Mercury*, Cookham Camp and Vicarage Road, just over a week before the exercise was due to start. The primary object was to ensure that all ratings thoroughly understood all phases of the exercise, and would be able to advise and instruct foreign communication staffs. This was achieved by going through all the orders in detail, discussing the implications of each stage on the communication organisation, and finally conducting practical exercises in order to familiarise liaison teams with the publications, call-signs and likely types of signals.

The teams finally departed loaded with files of serial orders, sacks of signal publications, steaming kits and binoculars. Those going to French ships travelled to Brest via Plymouth and the frigate *Burghead Bay*, those going to the Netherlands went by military steamer from Harwich, and the Belgian teams left by boat train via Dover and Ostend.

Our teams were soon impressed by the hospitality and friendliness of the foreign navies. They seemed keen to learn our methods and were very glad to have the opportunity of exercising with our ships.

One liaison team reported that they were allowed to choose their own menu. Sad to say, the French chefs were not given much of a chance—the standard order was "steak, egg and chips"!

By the time the ships gathered at Penzance for the preliminary conferences and intensive communication exercises, all liaison teams had got themselves pretty well in with their opposite numbers, and were able to make themselves understood in a fine mixture of Anglo-French-Dutch "signalese."

Three days were allocated at Penzance to work up



communication teams so that the force could manoeuvre safely by flags or fleet wave. These days were a hard grind for all concerned, particularly the conducting staffs. The Fleet was formed into groups, each controlled by a British Flag Officer or Captain (D) and exercised all forms of communication from dawn till dusk. The results, however, were worth the effort. Ships went to sea on the morning of Monday, 4th July, each with a nucleus of foreign signalmen and telegraphists capable of understanding and repeating the flagships hoists, and receiving simple manoeuvring signals in English on fleet wave.

The French and Netherlands major units had done some advance training before coming over, and produced excellent results. Their best men were quick to point out minor procedure errors made by our ships. The lesson is plain—nothing less than perfection, particularly in flagships.

From the communication point of view, little can be said about the actual exercise. Everything seemed to work. No major snags were encountered, and the standard of communication progressively improved as the exercise developed. As the French might have put it: "Cinq sur cinq-bien reçu-terminez"—or, in more homely language, "Strength 5—roger out."

The following extract from a report sums it up nicely:

"There was a general consensus of opinion that communications throughout were excellent. It had previously been feared that difficulties in language and technique would prejudice the whole efficiency of the operation but these fears turned out to be groundless."

## FONTAINEBLEAU

Much has been said and written about Western Union for the past twelve months, and there is a great deal that will never be said or written about it; however, the recent Exercise "Verity" demonstrated to the world that Western Union is not merely an idea but a fact. It is known by most people that Field-Marshal Montgomery, as Chairman of Western Europe C.-in-Cs.' Committee, has his Headquarters in Fontainebleau, and of course the navies of the countries concerned are playing no mean part.

A very high degree of international co-operation—co-operation undreamt of, say, ten years ago—is obtained at this Headquarters, and the basic elements of that co-operation have to be seen to be believed. Snags do develop, of course, but to my mind they are never any bigger than one might find in any large headquarters manned by one nation alone. The subject is a large one, and would take a deal of space. I cannot, for obvious reasons, say a great deal about organisation, but Communicators can probably conjecture a main signal office with a maitre principal timonier and a C.Y.S. in joint charge, petty officers in charge of their respective departments, with leading hands, quartier maitres, korporaals, matelots, irrespective of the nation to which they belong, in watches, transmitting, receiving, typing and distributing messages, irrespective of the method employed, the

language used, or the final destination of the message. For example, a French Transiliste (the French have kept their T/P operators) using a British circuit or a Dutch telegrafist as Chef de Garde in the Poste Centre Radio with a British telegraphist on a purely French circuit.

The Staff Officers (Communications), British and French, sit in an office together and keep a watchful if benign eye on the proceedings. We are, in fact, a happy team.

Sport, that great leveller, has done a tremendous amount to bring about solidarity. Last season, Unimer (this is the title the navies go by) brought home the Soccer League Shield and the Combined Services Soccer Cup and we hope to keep them where they are this season. At the moment our team consists of Ch. Std. Tams, Yeo, Tant, L./Sig. Pollard, L./Tel. Bowman (captain), Sig. McColm, Tel. Sparkes, Wtr. Mueller (Dutch Navy), Quartier Maitre Chef Potignon (French Navy), Tel. Brown, Std. Sutherland, and last but not least our huge 'keeper, Lt. Cdr. Moss.

We were not able to do very much about cricket this year, but in athletics gave a very good account of ourselves considering our small numbers against the larger numbers of the armies and air forces. A Combined Services hockey XI is in the making and we expect some lively bouts with the local French teams.

The social life of the Services here at Fontainebleau is very good considering the difficulties that have to be surmounted. An old French barracks was re-conditioned and given to us, and here all three British Services below the rank of sergeant are housed. The dining hall is used as a cinema and the A.K.C. produce two pictures a week. Some of them are a little "corny," but we take the rough with the smooth. We have seen the N.A.A.F.I. grow from a few boxes of cigarettes and matches, tucked away in an odd corner of the barracks, into a well-stocked shop where Service wives can get most of their shopping at British prices, and a beautifully appointed beer and snack bar for the residents.

Sergeants and warrant officers have a separate mess in town, remote from the barracks, and there is a very good effort being made to make it a success. Most of the married men have their families here, and are living out. All this, of course, is normal, but we have a good "get together" occasionally, a good example of which was seen in our recent concert, a combined show; and there is more to come.

Lastly, a word about language. Most Britishers can get around the world without having to learn languages, but here, in a great many cases, in order to increase efficiency, it has been found necessary to learn at least the conversational sentences of the other languages. The Dutchmen for the most part speak fairly good English, and so do some of the French, and of course a great many of the British speak French. The Belgians and Luxembourgers find little difficulty. There is plenty of goodwill to be found on all sides and this helps tremendously towards the accord so necessary in our task.

# LET'S TALK SHOP!

## WIRELESS COMMENTARY

There is good progress to report over the "General Signalling Instructions." The need for a revised edition of this book has been felt by officers and ratings going through courses, and others, for some time past. A good deal of useful spadework has been done over the past year by an officer who has recently left the staff of *Mercury*. Now another officer has come here for a while to finish the work. It has been difficult to decide what character the book should have. Should it be a repository of detail? Should it attempt within one cover to answer every question directly and remotely connected with Communications business, ready equally to assist and be the cause of prosecution in case of error? Or should it be less formal and probably less exact?

There is a long list of books upon which our business impinges. Airmen, those concerned with air direction, and others need pocket books and extracts, and the sin of duplication waits to trap the unwary author of G.S.I. But it is hoped that a useful compromise will be the outcome—firm instruction where this is possible and necessary, coupled with suggestion where no one method shows any obvious superiority or is as yet not fully tried.

It is sometimes suggested that a "Signal and Wireless Operating Manual" would do a helpful job. Similar to but smaller than the Seamanship Manual, it would be used to describe in simple and informal terms all the everyday techniques and procedures which bewilder the junior rating. It could perhaps be used to blow clear some of the magic which some still believe to be contained within a wireless set. This suggestion also takes the form of a more technical periodical publication (not of course to supersede *THE COMMUNICATOR*!).

What views do our readers have?

## V/S COMMENTARY

A fine demonstration of marching manœuvres was given to the public by *Mercury* Wrens at the Empress Hall, Earl's Court, on Wednesday, 19th October. This was part of a Services show at the National Savings Rally. The Wrens were televised and were found word-perfect for ten minutes of equal speed and precise manœuvres. The audience were amazed at the strange words of command and were loud in their applause.

The signal "Form One One" from "Form Two" recently put in abeyance will soon be back. It has been altered so that all columns turn ninety degrees together on executing the signal, the wing column immediately resuming the course. The signal "Love Tare," similarly, will start off with the equivalent of "PT 2 /AN CO 9," the wing column immediately wheeling back.

You will be glad to hear that the V.M.H. is being

revised and rewritten. Seldom has a book been more ready for it.

Distribution of B.R. 1792 Signal Training Manual should now be about complete. The last two to appear are the V.S.I. and M.S.B. (Minor Landing Craft and Boats Signal Book), which are due soon after Christmas.



"No, no, Corpen—not that sort of Turk's Head!"

## TOUCH-TYPING

Since the introduction of touch-typing in the Navy as a compulsory qualification for all Communicators, a great deal of difficulty has been experienced by some rates, particularly the older ratings, in mastering the keyboard with any degree of satisfaction.

It is, however, most important to be able to type properly, primarily to become a proficient Communicator, and in the individual's own interest it is always "something up your sleeve" for "Civvy Street," it being as well to remember that to learn to type "outside" costs money.

Trainees have shown a great tendency all along to look at the keys; it is considered that these "sight-typists" only achieve the required standards with far greater expenditure of energy than that expended by the touch-typist.

It is estimated that a sight-typist expends six times the amount of energy used by a touch-typist; in addition, the speed which can be attained by the sight-typist is limited, as is the amount of work he can perform, whereas in comparison the touch-typist can achieve far greater speeds with more efficiency and a capacity to carry on indefinitely.

It follows, then, that to become a first-class typist



the art of typing by touch must be given primary consideration. This is essential if the typist is to compete efficiently with the volume of work required to be typed during a spell on watch; in addition, those who view typing ability as "something up the sleeve" for demob. day will do well to remember that a sight-typist does not fare very well against civilian touch-type standards.

As a step forward a movement is at present under way in *Mercury* to black-out all key tops on typewriters in use for training purposes; Communicators everywhere are therefore advised to cultivate the art of not looking at the keys.

For the benefit of those who cannot progress without looking at the keyboard, simple remedial means are available to overcome this habit.

Blacking-out can be achieved by two methods:

- (a) Covering each key individually by means of tinfoil, black adhesive plaster or metal key-top blanks; or
- (b) By completely covering the whole keyboard by means of a metal shield or a piece of three-ply wood cut to the size of the keyboard and secured to the two screws on the top front plate of the typewriter.

Another method is to take a length of cord, secure the ends to the two screws mounted on the top plate of the typewriter, allow sufficient cord to pass around the neck of the typist and sew a piece of dark material to the cords at the ends so that the keyboard is invisible to the operator.

In method (a) tinfoil caps can be made by cutting out discs of about the size of a penny, placing over the key and turning the edges under the key lip.

Metal key tops, which provide a more robust and permanent method of blacking-out, can be made from tin, copper, or brass scrap metal, cut into discs the size of a shilling and fashioned into shape to fit over the keys giving a good, tight fit.

Where only one or two typewriters are installed, these metal clips can be made as follows; drill a hole in a piece of metal plate, take a metal bolt, file off the threads until the bolt diameter is the same as the typewriter key top, then place the disc central over the hole of the metal plate (the diameter of which should be approximately 1/32 inch larger than that of the bolt) and hammer the bolt and disc into the hole in the plate. The result is the production of a metal cap which, provided that the measurements are correct, should fit tightly over the typewriter keys.

The top of the metal key top, when made, should be pressed in slightly to form a safe anchorage and so prevent the fingers slipping off the keys. These "caps" should be made to fit tight, as loose caps cancel out the advantage which is gained by their use.

It is hoped that as many ships and establishments as possible will make use of one or other of the above methods, which are mainly economical measures, to improve the standard of touch-typing in the Communications Branch.

## MATTERS EDUCATIONAL

### Candidates for the rank of Commissioned Communication Officer

" 'Tis not in mortals to command success; we must  
do more—deserve it."

As a quotation, this is probably rather inaccurate, but there is no denying its truth: the motto of the Royal Air Force, "Per Ardua ad Astra," puts the same thing in other words. In these days of confusion, when the ideal of equal opportunity is so often mistaken for something quite different, it is heartening to find that in the Services, at least, there is no self-deception concerning the true relationship between effort and reward. The man who is likely to "get on" is the one who has the ability, determination, personality, strength of character, or whatever you like to call it, to get down to real hard work.

All this brings us to the subject of our heading. Among the qualifications required of a candidate for commissioned rank in the Communications Branch is the possession of a 2nd Class Higher Educational Certificate, showing a pass (55 per cent. or over) in English and Navigation and two other subjects of his own choosing. The regulations (A.F.O. 2620/49) contain the following interesting paragraph: "In order that they may have the necessary educational background for the subjects of their technical courses, all candidates for Commissioned Rank (Branch List) . . . are advised in their own interest to study those optional subjects which will be most useful to them, and to test their knowledge by taking them in the Higher Educational Test."

The optional subject most useful to the qualifying C.C.O. is Electricity and Magnetism (this view is held by those who have done the qualifying course in H.M.S. *Mercury*). There are adequate reasons why this subject was not made compulsory either in addition to, or instead of one of, the existing compulsory subjects, which were both selected for their value in an officer's professional work.

No apologies are offered, therefore, for repeating the advice which should be given to all potential candidates:

- (a) Start your study for H.E.T. as soon as you have obtained your E.T.I. The younger you are, the easier you will find the work.
- (b) Make Electricity and Magnetism one of your optional subjects.
- (c) Make a real effort to cover the syllabus. You can take the papers one at a time if you wish, and you can try as often as you like. (With real preparation, there is no reason why one attempt should not be enough, and the second attempt should be a certainty.)
- (d) Consider your future. You *may* win the Irish Sweep or a large football pool, but the odds against you are pretty big. Your chance of reaching officer rank, with all that it implies in the way of a career and future security, is much greater.

A. R. J.

## COMMUNICATION WRENS' TRAINING

The number of W.R.N.S. Signal and Telegraphist ratings under training remains at the maximum number we can accommodate and, in addition to Part II training, the fourth advancement course for W.R.N.S. Telegraphists has just finished and the first Signal advancement course is at present under way. After 30th November, 1949, there will be no further advancement in the Signal category without professional qualification, so it is up to those who wish to qualify to apply for a course. There will be four courses of four weeks' duration during 1950, and as far as possible vacancies on courses will be filled in the order in which applications from recommended candidates are received.

It will have been noted by W.R.N.S. Telegraphists that for the past few months some Wrens of the category have been drafted straight to shore W/T

stations on completion of their training at *Mercury*. It is emphasised that, as stated in the last issue of THE COMMUNICATOR, priority is given to those who have served in the Air Command for a minimum of nine months and who have requested to transfer to General Service, a list of such volunteers being kept at Burghfield. At the time of writing, there are no Wren volunteers on this list, and until there are it will be necessary to fill shore W/T vacancies from *Mercury*.

In October a party of twenty-four W.R.N.S. Telegraphists under training gave an impressive display of marching manœuvres at the Empress Hall, Earl's Court, as part of National Savings Week Rally. The show, which was televised, filmed and broadcast, included performances by members of the three Services, and this is probably the first time members of the W.R.N.S. have demonstrated marching manœuvres, as this is not normally part of their curriculum.

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## RADIO INDUSTRY NOTES

A new development of great interest to all branches of the electrical engineering industry has recently been announced by Fielden (Electronics) Ltd. This is an electrical graph recorder using a new system consisting of a servo-operated mechanism positionally controlled by a moving coil or other indicating instrument. The pointer of the latter is replaced by a light vane which acts as one plate of a variable capacitor; and another similar vane is maintained by the servo mechanism at a constant spacing, by means of an electronic capacitance relay controlling the direction of feed back in a valve oscillator. The pen arm is geared to the servo motor, obviating all the difficulties which arise in ordinary recording equipment due to lack of power, pen weight, changing ink level, and pivot sticking. The instrument requires no levelling, and will operate in any position, under any conditions of vibration. It is claimed to be capable of recording a change of 0.1 per cent. of scale reading, which in the case of a 0.50 microamp. movement represents a change of 0.05 microamp. The long-term calibration stability is identical with that of the indicating meter.

Many new ideas were disclosed to the public at Radiolympia this year. This, the 16th National Radio Exhibition, was open from 28th September to 8th October, and approximately 400,000 people paid for admission. Overseas buyers from about fifteen countries provided an impressive contribution to this total. It is to be deplored that preparations were marred by a strike of carpenters and electricians, making it necessary to cancel the preview arranged for 27th September; but, apart from the unjustifiable inconvenience caused, it is believed that no serious harm resulted to the export trade.

During the two years since the last Radio Exhibition, the economic situation, as it affects the radio industry, has changed for the better. Supplies of raw materials are more regular, if not plentiful;

public taste has become more clearly defined; production efficiency has improved and costs have been reduced. Thus, at Radiolympia, the visitor was able to select from ranges of highly competitive products at prices which were, in this era of inflationary tendencies, a most agreeable surprise.

The entire display was most attractive, and reflected the efficiency of the industry. In spite of the large number of stands and the enthusiastic crowds of visitors, there was little difficulty in getting round, and seeing and hearing many of the numerous interesting demonstrations. As was anticipated, television was well to the fore. An experimental system of colour television attracted large crowds, and great interest was shown in various projection systems for enlarging the picture. These and other technical details have already been described in the technical Press. In normal receivers the A.C.-D.C. series heater technique, which dispenses with the heavy mains transformer, has been widely adopted. For D.C. voltages below 220, for which this system is unsuitable, two makers have employed ingenious circuits using Metrosil (non-linear) resistors.

In spite of double purchase tax, the prices of radiograms were surprisingly low, for all types of models, and a striking feature of the display was the excellence of the cabinet work. This was also true of broadcast receivers; the use of plastics mainly in the lighter portables and cheaper table models seems to indicate that for "furnishing" purposes the public has not been deflected from its preference for the beauty of high-class woodwork. Several refinements, including twin loudspeakers, are featured in table models, which need no longer be shunned by lovers of "quality" in reproduction. A former rarity, the A.C.-D.C.-battery set, is now produced by a number of makers.

As forecast in the last issue of these notes, the



Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Fighting Services, and the G.P.O. all displayed some new and interesting products. These departments control between them what amounts to the largest scientific organisation in Great Britain, and co-operate with the radio industry over a very wide field. It is, perhaps, not generally realised that discoveries and developments made in the course of the work of these departments are being applied in air and sea navigation, in industrial research, in medicine, journalism, police work, film making, agriculture, and in numerous other ways for the benefit of mankind.

A. R. J.

## SOLENT DIVISION, R.N.V.R.

We have had a struggle since the war to try to master the new books and procedures. But during the summer we have had three successful Signalmen's week-ends in the Division's four M.Ls. After assiduous practice on Thursday evenings with Tuffnel box and manœuvring boards, the intricacies of the F.S.B. have become less complex, and at sea the M.Ls. have been manœuvred as a division of major war vessels. On one occasion we were joined by four M.T.Bs. from H.M.S. *Hornet* which enabled us to carry out equal speed manœuvres as a flotilla and to see our mistakes for ourselves.

C.Y.S. Corbin has joined the instructional staff and has succeeded in getting an imposing new entry class going. L./Sig. E. Reynolds, Sig. L. Grant and O./Sig. R. C. Wells form the backbone of a small but keen branch under Lt. Cdr. N. B. Beale.

P.O. Tel. A. Abraham, ex-submarine and M.T.B. sparker, is hoping to start an R.N.V.(W.)R. unit in Bournemouth, which will eventually be linked up with a training centre to be established in our new headquarters ship now being converted for us.

## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of THE COMMUNICATOR

DEAR SIR,

In his contribution to the Summer, 1949, Number of THE COMMUNICATOR, your East Indies correspondent observes that H.M.S. *Mauritius* will shortly be afforded her first opportunity of visiting the island from which she takes her name. He will therefore be surprised to learn that the island first entertained its cruiser in 1941, when she paid her maiden visit in company with *Hermes* (in which I was serving) and other ships.

I am sorry to do the present ship's company of H.M.S. *Mauritius* out of their promised maiden visit to the island, but am sure they will enjoy whatever visits come their way.

L. J. DAVIS, Lt.(L), R.N.



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# GOING THE ROUNDS IN "MERCURY"

## CHIEFS' CHATTER

Our main item of news this term is the occupation of the new Accommodation Buildings by the C.P.Os. Wednesday, 2nd November, was the big day and our infiltration into the new quarters was carried out with due ceremony.

Some weeks previously we were notified by Captain Crombie that the plumbing arrangements were due for basin trials, and it came to us with great satisfaction that the Chiefs had at long last reached the top of the housing list on the Communication Housing Estate. Mr. Pattison and his large family were informed officially that owing to their overcrowded and uncomfortable conditions it was considered essential that they should be moved—lock, stock and "barrels." It is not known whether priority of occupation was based on a "points" scheme, but, in anticipation of such a departure, the President informed us at the last monthly "pow-wow" that he was endeavouring to get as many "pints" as he could.

Captain Crombie performed the opening ceremony at 1145 and gave a brief speech to a very representative audience, culled from all walks of Leydene life, both Service and civilian. Captain Crombie pointed out the many financial and other difficulties that had been overcome, and hoped that the inauguration was the forerunner to the solving of the Leydene housing problem.

The buildings themselves are of brick, and are warm, dry and snug, thus enabling the victualled members to hibernate very nicely for the winter. Everything is in a very handy place and there is absolutely no occasion whatever for the occupant of the boudoir to expose himself to the elements in any shape or form. Incidentally, there is no truth in the rumour that the Forestry Commission were responsible for our vacation of the old sleeping quarters.

After the Captain's closing remarks we were all "called to the bar" in order to "wet the gable's head," and we all became "semi-detached" at about 1200.

The autumn round of social activities looms ahead once more, and once again the voting of a large portion from the Mess funds to finance the children's party was a mere formality. The grand dance is being held on 13th December and the children's party on 14th December. Former members of the Mess are cordially invited to attend the grand dance, which has become an annual "must" for the socially minded of our community.

*Mercury* achieved the unprecedented success this year of winning the Port Command Water Polo League, and as two members of the Mess (C.P.O. Tel. Mitchell and C.R.E. Hancock) were in the team throughout the season, the Sports Officer has given permission (via S156!) for us to keep it in our Mess

showcase. So when you next visit the Mess and your "rum-shot" gaze falls on this handsome piece, please do not inquire of the Secretary if it is for darts, snooker or the Beer Drinking Competition.

"Ins and outs" include C.P.O. Tel. Carter to Malta, C.Y.S. Eldridge to *Hawke* (subject to the approval of the Portsmouth Football Supporters' Club) and C.P.O. Tel. Ross to *Chequers*.

As to our sporting activities, that creeping paralysis "pensionitis" has kept us out of the more strenuous competitions, although we did play the Wrens at table tennis recently and were well thrashed. One rather thinks that the method of announcing the next game, i.e., "Chief Yeoman Bugwhiskers versus Pamela," is a little demoralising, even when reaching the ripe old age of 40!

In conclusion, the President (C.Y.S. Pattison), Vice-President (C.R.E. Hart) and Secretary (Ch. Wtr. Daines) join with all present members of the Mess in wishing you a very happy Christmas wherever you may be and a really prosperous New Year. Hoping to see many of you soon; there's a spare bunk back in the Buildings!

## RIFLE SHOOTING

*Mercury* Rifle Club continues to flourish. Undoubtedly the magnificent weather of the long summer contributed to the popularity of dinner-hour activities down in the valley, but considerable credit must go to the enthusiastic Committee, and in particular to *Mercury's* G.I., C.P.O. Sellick, who has been the presiding genius at our new 25-yard firing point throughout the season. Rather more than 200 of the denizens of Leydene have shared in the pleasures and disappointments of .22 practice and competitions, held on a club basis, this year.

The Welfare Committee, recognising the general interest in the sport, most generously provided funds for the purchase of two new B.S.A. 12/15 .22 match rifles, which are now in use.

Monthly competitions were held for awards of silver spoons (highest monthly average) and medals (spot prize). The following were the winners:

	<i>Spoon</i>	<i>Score</i>
May	C.P.O. Tel. Illesley .. ..	94.2
June	Mr. Barker .. ..	97.2
July	Yeo. Adams .. ..	97.0
August	Instr. Cdr. East .. ..	98.2
September	Wren Greaves .. ..	98.5
October	Wren Wagstaff .. ..	97.3
	<i>Medal.</i>	<i>Score</i>
May	P.O. Tel. Wilkinson .. ..	84.2
June	Wtr. Dennis .. ..	78.0
July	Instr. Lt. d'Authrean .. ..	88.2
August	Wren Houston .. ..	91.7
September	Wren Anthony .. ..	93.5
October	Wren Inglefield .. ..	95.3



For the encouragement of those who might have felt rather "out of it" in the straight competitions, a handicap shoot was held in September, handicaps being allotted on a minimum of four practice targets. This proved a very attractive feature, arousing much interest. The winners were:

		Score	Handicap	Total
1st	Wren Dolan	96	13-8	109-8
2nd	Wren Audrey	98	11-2	109-2
3rd	Instr. Lt. Cdr. Jones	96	11-5	107-5

The big event of September was the team competition for the Inter-Divisional Cup. Divisions were allowed to enter as many representative teams as they wished, and a very close struggle developed. The cup was deservedly won by the Supply and Secretariat Division, and was presented to the winning team by Captain J. H. F. Crombie, D.S.O., at the fortnightly parade on Friday, 7th October. Individual scores were:

Ch. Wtr. Herring, 98; Wtr. Dennis, 98; Wtr. Price, 94; Wtr. Bennett, 90. (Average score, 95.)

The season ended, with the onset of wintry conditions, on 31st October; but it is hoped that it will be possible to continue practice for local friendly matches, and for the Command Rifle Meeting next May. The G.I. will be pleased to hear of all those who are interested in the latter, particularly experienced shots, if they are likely to be in *Mercury* at the time of this meeting. It is abundantly clear, however, that if the Establishment is to retain the laurels won last May facilities for shooting in the winter months must be improved. An indoor .22 range is needed: just how it is to be achieved in the prevailing circumstances is not so clear; but where there's a will there is usually a way.

A. R. J.

## "MEONMAID"

The 1949 season will be remembered as having one of the loveliest summers for many years. As a result, *Meonmaid* has been on the go continuously; bookings have run consecutively and little time has been wasted. One party lived aboard for nine days, and the yacht spent only one week-end at her moorings between May and October.

There is now, therefore, a safe reserve of funds for a new suit of sails when the time comes and for other emergencies should the need arise.

*Meonmaid* is once again up at Leydene, where the fair-wear-and-tear defect list can more easily be dealt with before next spring.

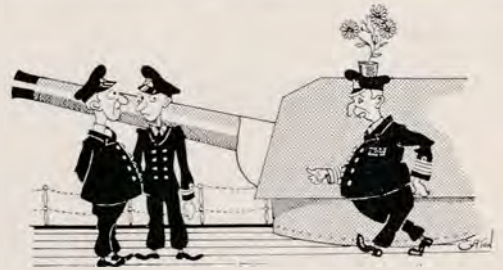
Because of all the cruising there was not quite so much racing as last year; the four races for the Monarch Bowl were contested, however, and greatly enjoyed by all who sailed in them. H.M.S. *Excellent's* *Sea Wraith* (the holder) won the trophy again by winning all four races with plenty of time to spare in each. Her white hull and red-hatted skipper proved

too swift to catch; only once did we lead the field for any length of time and then *Sea Wraith* sailed through with apparent ease. H.M.S. *Daedalus's* *See Hexe* was second in every race, not far ahead (we like to think) of *Meonmaid*, who scored two thirds, one fourth and a fifth, resulting in third place on points for the cup.

The joys of random cruising about the Solent are well known to yachtsmen and *Meonmaid* certainly took her share of them this year. Among the highlights of the season was the recovery of a would-be suicide from the sea and his subsequent delivery to the police; there is also an entry in the ship's log that on a certain night no fewer than twelve persons and two dogs were entertained to light refreshments in the cabin; the entry runs on (and loses credibility thereby): "2300 . . . Bar closed."

We witnessed the first post-war sail of *Astra*, who left Portsmouth Harbour under sail alone. It was a fine sight to see such a big yacht fitted out again.

There is no doubt that this season has been a success; a large number of people have had enormous fun and plenty of fresh air afloat, all of which sounds less attractive now that the winter is upon us. We hope that next year even more skippers and crews will be found, especially from those who subscribed so generously to getting *Meonmaid* going.



"Watch your step, Rigby, the Old Man's got a weed on."

## CIVILIAN COMMENTARY

The Christmas season is overcast for some of our colleagues by the "redundancy" decision which affects at present three of them. Two, Mr. Fox and Mr. Gardenen, only joined our ranks about the time of the last issue of *Mercury*. Mr. Bugg, who has been with us longer, is the other member affected. One can only wish them farewell and good luck and hope that their next job will be of a more permanent nature. "Great Expectations" is the other item of interest to all. During the past few weeks all the eligible T.Cs. have attended interviews in the Dockyard with a "hope" of being elected to the rank of Clerical Officer. The list of successful candidates is awaited, but somehow not eagerly, because each

member that has attended is so sure that *he* has not been selected and is ready to offer his congratulations to his successful chum.

There will, of necessity, be some changes to be made in the organisation of *Mercury* civilians when the redundancy orders are completed, so a little shift round can be anticipated.

The decision of the powers-that-be to turn down the request for increase of pay for the lower paid civil servants was probably expected more or less in view of the economy programme, but it does not seem to have been received with the "expressions of pleasure" that was considered by some of our colleagues as being the correct way to receive any Government decision. According to them, we should all be pleased that some one had the courage to make that decision. Possibly, though, we shall hear more about such things later on.

Nothing further has been heard about the Whitley Office Committee, but we are still hoping it has not been entirely forgotten.

For the unsuccessful candidates in the interview for C.O. the evening school classes are available to help them in the competitive examinations to be held in due course. There are good reports of the help given and every effort should be made to take advantage of the opportunity to brush up in the subjects normally let slide as time goes by. The hours are, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the classes are available at Drayton Road School, Northend, Francis Avenue School, Southsea and Portsdown School, Cosham. Any inquiries will be answered at these schools, preferably on Tuesday evenings before 7 p.m.

## SPORT

The winter season has started with great activity and high hopes. Our water polo team ended their season victoriously and we are now looking to our Soccer team for great achievements.

The beginning of September brought sounds to the Broadwalk which would have awakened the dead as the seven-a-side soccer and hockey tournaments were fought out to the bitter end. Rugger enthusiasts were unable to get away to an early start, but now have a good full-sized pitch in East Meon for their scrimmages: we are particularly grateful to Mr. Cross for letting us use his field and also to those who bore the brunt of the work of preparing our grounds for the winter.

Cross-country running has made its first post-war demands on the School and we hope to build up a useful team during the coming season.

Except for soccer we have a shortage of players. To those who hesitate to put their names down for ship's or trial games we give every encouragement to come forward and help *Mercury* show the Portsmouth Command just what buntings and sparkers are made of.

## SOCCER

*Mercury* finished the 1948-49 season third in the U.S. League, Division II, two points behind the winners—the Royal Marines. The Reserve Fleet came second on goal average.

We started the 1949-50 season with an entirely new team, with one exception—L./Tel. Spreadbury. Drafts have already made five changes necessary, but, luckily, so far with little or no ill-effects.

Last season our team consisted mainly of experienced players, such as C.P.O. Tel. Baister (now at Malta), Chief Yeo. Driver (now an AH.2. in Oxfordshire) and Mr. Foxlee. This season we are banking on younger players and speed as against age and experience and we are holding our cwn.

To get the players fit, a Seven-a-Side League has been run in two sections of six teams each, and inside six weeks this enabled eighty-four players to play at least five games each.

Sparkers "A," consisting of L./Tels. Pay, Bird, Drummond, Taylor, Spreadbury and Pomeroy, and Tel. Coote, won Section "A" without dropping a point, and they also beat Sparkers "B" (the winners of Section "B") in the final for the championship.

Two small grounds were made available on the Broadwalk for the Seven-a-Side League and have been named Bramall Lane and White Hart Lane.

Number One full-sized ground at Leydene has been reseeded and is looking fine. The first match on the ground, which has been named St. James's Park, was played against the R.N. Writers in the first round of the U.S. Junior Challenge Cup, and *Mercury* won by 5 goals to 1. We had already beaten the Royal Air Force at Thorney Island by 8 goals to nil in the preliminary round of this cup.

A new ground has also been made for us at Soberton (the home of our Wrens), where the large cricket ground has been divided and marked out for soccer and hockey. This ground has been named Villa Park, and except for a slight slope has a fine playing surface.

The old Yeovil ground is not ours this season. It has been ploughed for barley.

In the Navy Cup *Mercury*, the only Second Division team entered, were beaten 2-1 by *Vernon*. We had two men injured throughout the second half. It was a fair result.

In the League Division II, the R.A.O.C. defeated us 3-2 at Villa Park, but we have gained away victories against *Hornet* (3-1), *Victory* (5-2) and *Sr. Vincent* (5-2), and these wins have kept us right up in the first three. It's going to be a tough league as usual, and it is beginning to look as if we will have to beat the R.A.O.C. in our return game with them on 9th January if we are to stop this pretty good team from winning the league at their first attempt.

The first team, on going to Press, consists of L./Tel. Pay; L./Sig. Pickering and Sig. Henderson; L./Tel. Irvine (captain), L./Tel. Perrett and Sig. Philip; L./Tel. Pomeroy, P.O. Tel. Taylor, Joiner



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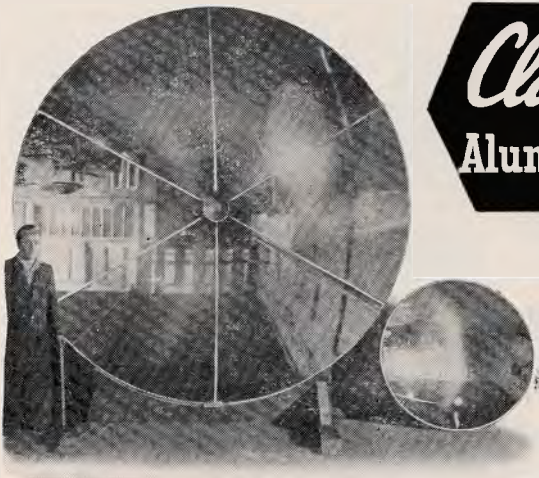
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Fish, L./Tel. Spreadbury and L./Tel. Drummond.

We are very grateful to the *Mercury* Welfare Committee, who, with a very generous grant, have made us want for nothing in the way of equipment for the grounds and teams. This action has ensured that *Mercury* is one of the best turned-out teams in the Portsmouth area.

J. C.

### HOCKEY

With the continuation of the glorious summer weather the hockey season started with a swing. To encourage would-be enthusiasts we began a seven-a-side tournament which proved a great success, with fifteen teams entering for the competition. This was eventually won (after an excellent battle) by the Long Course (Lectrons) defeating a team of Leading Telegraphists (Q) (Whitehall Wanderers).

Regrettably our record since the seven-a-side has been one of constant defeat. In fact, the only game we have won so far was versus the Wrens (13-0), but we are completely undisturbed by this. All the games have been very pleasant and enjoyed by everyone. One of the best was played versus Haslemere H.C. at Bordon on Saturday, 1st October. We were defeated by only one goal and had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Let us look forward to the future with an eye to getting that extra goal that makes all the difference, so that we can record our successes in the Easter Number.

### RUGGER

The season has not started auspiciously. Of our seven fixtures so far, three have been cancelled. It is kinder to draw a veil over the results of the others.

Rugger's usual handicap—four more men in the team—has been aggravated recently by the approach of exams. for classes which provide many of our players.

But, on a more optimistic note, we have at last a ground of our own at East Meon; and it is hoped that trial and practice matches on it may bring to light hitherto undiscovered talent and reveal new players in incoming classes to take the place of those who will shortly go with the draft.

One thing the season has revealed is that we already have a nucleus of keen players who contrive to turn out for almost every match; if we can find the support for them, there is plenty of time yet to turn the season into a success.

### WATER POLO

It will be recalled that in the last issue of *THE COMMUNICATOR* we gave some details of the excellent start *Mercury* had made to the water polo season. It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that we announce in this issue that H.M.S. *Mercury* completed the season as winners of the Portsmouth Command "B" League. Our early season form was retained throughout the fixture list, and our final analysis read: played, 14; won, 11; drawn, 3; goals for, 55; goals against, 11; points, 25.

As a prelude to the presentation of the "A" and



H.M.S. "Mercury" Water Polo Team.  
Winners of "B" League

"B" League trophies we played the winners of "A" League at Pitt Street Baths. After a spectacular and strenuous game, during which at one time we led 3-0, honours became even, with the score at three-all. As our opponents (*St. Vincent*) had already been beaten twice, we now hold the proud record of being the only undefeated team in the whole of the Portsmouth Command. This first-class performance becomes all the more remarkable, when reflecting that our opportunities for practice are negligible.

The following represented H.M.S. *Mercury* during 1949:—

C.R.E. Hancock (captain and secretary), C.P.O. Tel. Mitchell, Yeo. Tyler, Rochfort and Rumble, P.O. Tels. Godley, Overton and Jobling, L./Tels. Taylor, Cardwell and Rowbotham, Tels. Beattie and Crossley, Sigs. Ingham and Bush, O. Sea. King and L./Wtr. Munro.

We were also fortunate in having a small but very enthusiastic band of supporters, who turned up regularly to give us every encouragement. A particularly desirable asset this, when one considers that every match to us was an away game.

### W.R.N.S. NOTES

Our cricket team has had a very good season, and now badminton, hockey, rifle shooting, table tennis and fencing are flourishing. The last-named is becoming extremely popular, and we are most fortunate in having our own foils, masks and jackets now. On a fine evening, the sports field resembles a scene from "The Three Musketeers."

Whilst we are on the subject of sport, I should like to say how grateful we are to the Wrens who contributed to our success in the Inter-Unit Sports, and in retaining our two cups for the Inter-Unit Relay and Aggregate. In the Inter-Unit Sports, the *Mercury* star shone very brightly. P.O. Wren McKaskie gained a first in the hurdles, a third in the 100 yards, and a third in the 220 yards; Wren Beer a second in the 100 yards, and another in the 220 yards; and Wren Graye a first in the high jump and repeated



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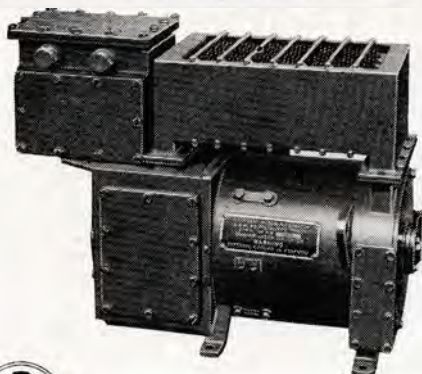
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the performance in the long jump. Wren Williams came third in the javelin throwing. A really splendid performance. Thank you, P.O. Wren McKaskie and Wrens Beer, Graye and Williams; we are very proud of you.

Our thanks and congratulations also to our swimming team—Wrens Gillard, Parnell, M. M. Davies and Marston—who have done so splendidly. Wren Gillard had two firsts and a second in the Portsmouth Command Championships, a second in the Navy Championships and a third in the Inter-Services Championships—a very proud record. Well done!

Soberton Towers gave a dance on 9th July which was a tremendous success. The weather was perfect, and the garden fete which preceded it in the grounds of the house was most professionally organised. The fete was in aid of funds for the local church, and practically raised the requisite sum of money on the spot. A very creditable effort and a big feather in the caps of all the "back-room girls."

The 12th of July brought a very novel dance in the P.O.s' Mess, a "Rags and Tatters Ball." Some of the costumes really defied description, and the general effect during the dancing was most pleasing, and extremely original. Never before have such abbreviated rags been worn by such a bevy of attractive tramps!

First Officer Blundell, Drafting Officer, H.M.T.E. *Dauntless*, paid us a surprise visit recently and met several members of Ship's Company with whom she had been associated at other establishments. We were most happy to see her again and reminisce about the old days.

Between June and October our incoming personnel have been Signals 5, 6, 6B., 7 and 8, W/T 18, 19 and 20, P.O.'s. and L/Wrens' Qualifying Course No. 4, and a Refresher Course, Holding for Overseas. Outgoing: Signals 4 and 5, W/T 12, 13, and 14, and the Refresher Course, outward bound for foreign climes.

Regular trips are still arranged to take classes over various ships, M.S.O., Portsmouth, and Lee-on-Solent, and these are extremely popular. In fact, the various visits to Signals establishments are not only appreciated by the trainees, but even the Master-at-Arms is thinking of changing category.

Our Christmas pantomime is in rehearsal, and many weird and wonderful sounds are wafted daily from the cinema. Everything is "top secret" at present, and apart from the title, "Aladdin and His Wonderful Amp," all is veiled in mystery.

It is with great regret that we bid good-bye to our very popular Officer-in-Charge, First Officer B. J. Wood. Her term of office at *Mercury* terminated on 16th November, and on 18th November she took up her new appointment at H.M.S. *Daedalus*. The eighteen months that she has spent with us have gone so quickly, and we shall miss her very much. I should like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of both Ship's Company and Trainee Wrens of *Mercury*, our gratitude for all that First Officer

has done for us and for her great kindness and understanding at all times. We will not say good-bye, Ma'am, just "Au revoir," and we offer our sincere good wishes and all good luck in your new appointment.

We welcome our new Officer-in-Charge, First Officer Foster-Hall, from Greenwich College, who arrived on 10th November, and we hope that her appointment at *Mercury* will be a happy one.

## ENTERTAINMENTS

With the advent of the winter months the Theatre has again sprung into life. We have had Williams' and Sen's production, "Variety Follies," but the most outstanding event so far has been the personal appearance of the well-known stage, screen and radio star Jack Warner. He gave a splendid two-hour entertainment, proving beyond all doubt his versatility in every form of entertainment. The fact that he appeared supported only by his pianist and held the audience for almost a couple of hours speaks for itself. Our grateful thanks are due to both he and Bob Alderson, his pianist, and also to Lt. Cdr. Tyers, R.N.V.R., who was mainly instrumental in arranging for the appearance of the star of the old Garrison Theatre. It is hoped that the appearance of such a talented artist will be the forerunner of personal visits by other well-known stars. Jack Warner is now making a new film, and we wish him every success in his future activities.

Rehearsals for the Christmas pantomime are proceeding apace and have reached a fairly advanced state. "Aladdin and his Wonderful Amp" is the title of this season's production, and we are fortunate to have retained nearly all the male cast of our last show, "Close up" (including our resident "Dame," Lt. Cdr. Sommerville). In the glamour department, we have not been quite so lucky, draft chits having claimed everyone from the previous show. We are happy to report that in response to an appeal for talent an extremely large number of candidates appeared on the target, and have proved that, as usual, there is no lack of enthusiasm among the Wrens. Among the applicants were two zealous and talented dressmakers and designers. They have displayed much imagination and ingenuity, and we have no hesitation in forecasting that the show will be one of the best-dressed ever.

Those taking part include Jake Sommerville, John Hart, Jean Soden, Prudence Grundy, John Townsend, Vic Godley, Keith Smith, Tom Overton, Dorothy Gardner and the Eight Leydene Ladies. The show is written and produced by Percy Hancock, stage management is under the direction of Joe Chillman, and our pianist, as usual, Denis Holden.

This pantomime will mark the end of the many shows presented by the present team, and every effort is being made to produce something worthy of the occasion.





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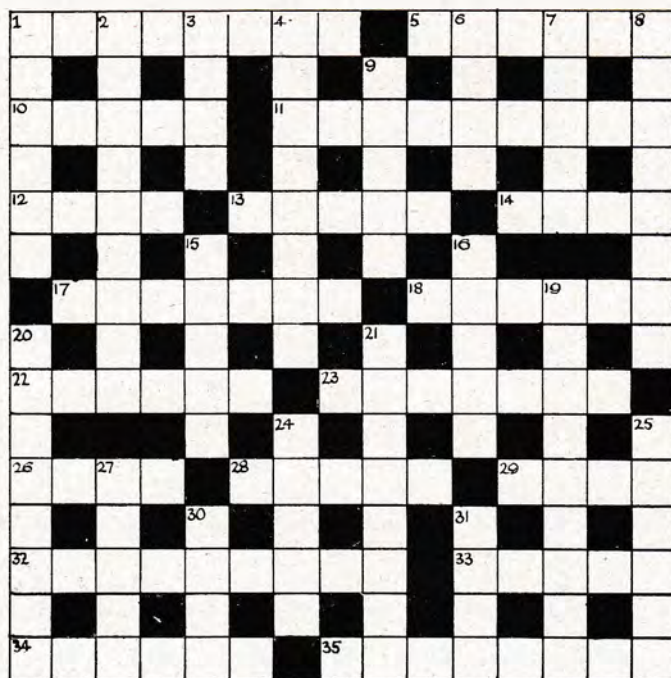


## NAVAL HISTORY CROSSWORD

(See page 133 for Solution)

**Across**—1, Did this Admiral prefer cane bows to guns? (8). 5, Give weapons to the girl (6). 10, Scottish Ben (5). 11, The foe Nelson never met (9). 12, Possesses (4). 13, Turn ports not port turns (5). 14, Chin measurement (4). 17, Retired Naval Officers are each put in bed (7). 18, Queen Mary thought the name of this port would be found engraved on her heart (6). 22, Clever (6). 23, Cunning young animals (3, 4). 26, Was this Captain responsible for mail? (4). 28, Takes off (5). 29, Nelson's Hamilton (4). 32, It had its methods

of advocating National Service (5, 4). 33, Backward wheel mark in Italian City (5). 34, Long John (6). 35, Even brave men run when they hear this gun (8).



**Down**—1, Two London bells comprise him. 2, Battle Cape (2, 7). 3, Found in all Admiral's orders (4). 4, Beer for (29), (8). 6, Operation in a soldier has a strong connection (4). 7, North Western isle (5). (8) Red River ship (8). 9, Circumnavigator (5). 15, Naval Captain who found fame on land (5). 16, Springy form of progress (5). 19, This monk preferred a real amble (9). 20, Admiralty Diarist (3, 5). 21, Scrap of animal (3, 5). 24, Sea where a battle was fought (5). 25, This battle should have been a holy conflict (6). 27, Explosive abode (5). 30, Man of three-legged arms (4). 31, Not left without board (4).

## WARDROOM NOTES

The first Signal Officers' Reunion to be held in *Mercury* was a great success, 146 past and present Signal Officers, including R.N.V.R. and W.R.N.S. (Ce) officers, attending. We would liked to have seen more, but the present-day difficulties of "getting away" prevented many who hoped to come from turning up. The weather was ideal and the terrace made an excellent background for the party. Champagne corks flew incredible distances to the danger of the unsuspecting, though no casualties occurred. A large sporting programme on the Saturday gave the cricketers, golfers and yachtsmen a chance to continue the good work. After such a successful start it is hoped to make the reunion an annual affair.

Another annual event was the dinner to the W.R.N.S. officers at Burghfields who have to travel forty-five miles in a coach, which in itself is proof that they must enjoy coming. We are also being

honoured by a visit from Whaley in the near future so we must show our paces to the home of guest nights.

Alterations are at last completed in the ante-room and the results are most successful. One or two good pictures are required to round the room off and any suggestions on how to obtain them will be welcomed.

Captain Earl Cairns left us shortly after the summer leave, and this opportunity is taken of thanking him for his help and guidance in improving and running the Mess. Other departures have been First Officer Wood who was a member of the Mess Committee and a great help over staff problems, and Lt. Diamond who ran the ship's entertainments.

The Long Course retained the Seven-a-Side Hockey Cup for the Wardroom, but our soccer team found seven-a-side tactics a little too exhausting.



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## RECENT PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE.—*Although every endeavour is made to ensure that the information in this section is correct, we ask readers not to treat it as authoritative in the strict sense, and to grant us their indulgence if occasional errors are made.]*

Name	Rank	Whence	Whither
R. C. ARMSTRONG .. ..	C.C.O.	Agincourt	Mercury (Conversion Course)
R. J. ATTRIDGE .. ..	C.C.O.	Osprey	Mercury (Conversion Course)
W. J. B. G. AYRES .. ..	S.C.C.O.	Theseus	Vengeance
E. B. ASHMORE, D.S.C. ..	Lt. Cdr.	President	Vengeance
J. C. S. BROWN .. ..	S.C.C.O.	Bruce	St. Angelo
Miss E. G. Barnfield ..	2/O W.R.N.S.	President	Pembroke
W. L. BREWER, R.N.Z.N.	A/Comm. Lt.	Maori	Flowerdown
A. G. BROWN, D.S.M. ..	C.C.O.	Heron	Gannet
A. D. BLACK .. ..	Lt., R.A.N.	Mercury	To revert to R.A.N.
H. P. BRADLEY .. ..	C.C.O.	Ocean	Dryad (Fort Southwick)
J. A. S. BRAME .. ..	Lt. Cdr.	President	Placed on retired list in rank of Cdr. (Ret'd)
C. D. BONHAM-CARTER ..	Captain	Victory	Pelican
B. N. BEALE .. ..	Lt. Cdr. (C), R.N.V.R.	Solent Div., R.N.V.R.	Mercury for 14 days training
G. A. BLOODWORTH ..	C.C.O.	Mercury	Two years exchange service in R.N.Z.N.
K. H. Brittain .. ..	Lt. (Ce) R.N.V.R.	Humber Div., R.N.V.R.	Victory for 16 days training
R. F. BULLER .. ..	Lt.	Mercury	Brittania
C. B. BROOKE .. ..	Cdr.	Victory	Illustrious
R. W. D. BRAY .. ..	Lt. Cdr.	Ganges	President (Staff Course)
M. BROAD .. ..	A/C.C.O.	Mercury (Qualifying Course)	Battleaxe
P. W. B. BROOKING, C.B., D.S.O. AND BAR	Rear-Admiral	F.O. Gibraltar	Promoted Vice-Admiral
P. R. CHAPMAN .. ..	Lt. R.N.V.(W)R.	No. 3 District R.N.V.(W)R.	Mercury for 14 days training
F. J. CAINE .. ..	S.C.C.O. R.N.V.(W)R.	No. 3 District R.N.V.(W)R.	Section Officer No. 5 District, R.N.V.(W)R.
G. H. W. COOPER, D.S.M.	Ty. A/S.C.C.O.	Re-employed	Unicorn
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The Earl CAIRNS .. ..	Captain	Mercury	President (S.O.W.C.)
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F. W. CHARRETT .. ..	C.C.O.	Mauritius	Pembroke (R.N.S.S. Cookham)
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D. O. DYKES .. ..	Lt.	Cleopatra	Mercury
M. R. DICK, C.B.E., D.S.C.	Captain	President	Promoted Rear-Admiral
J. DICKSON .. ..	Lt. R.N.V.R.	No. 1 District (R.N.V.(W)R.)	Mercury for 14 days training
R. D. EAST, M.A. . .	Inst. Lt. Cdr.	Mercury	Granted Actg. Interim rank of Instr. Cdr.
Miss M. A. EUNSON ..	3/O W.R.N.S.	Mercury	St. Angelo
J. M. A. ENNION ..	Lt. Cdr.	Flowerdown	Placed on retired list own request, rank of Cdr.
P. ELLIS .. ..	A/C.C.O.	Mercury (Qualifying Course)	Diadem
R. W. EVANS .. ..	A/C.C.O.	Mercury (Qualifying Course)	N.A.S., Milltown
C. C. ENNEVER, D.S.C. ..	Lt. Cdr.	President	Falcon
J. C. EDMONDSON, The Hon.	Lt.	Brittania	Vengeance
D. A. FORREST .. ..	Lt. Cdr.	Mercury II	Theseus
K. C. M. FLEETWOOD ..	Lt. Cdr.	President	Berry Head
P. FARRELLY .. ..	C.C.O.	Terror	Promoted to S.C.C.O. (Air)
G. FROUD .. ..	A/S.C.C.O.	Mercury (Qualifying Course)	Illustrious
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A. L. K. D. HERBERT- GUSTAR	A/C.C.O.	Mercury (Qualifying Course)	St. Angelo
L. C. J. HOWARD .. ..	C.C.O. (Air)	Lent to R.A.N.	Promoted S.C.C.O. (Air)
L. P. HUBBARD .. ..	S.C.C.O.	Pembroke	Promoted Comm. Lt.
A. E. HOWELL .. ..	A/C.C.O.	Mercury (Qualifying Course)	Forth
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J. D. JACKSON, D.S.C. ..	Lt.	Tamar	Promoted Lt. Cdr.
H. JUKES .. ..	Comm. Lt.	Victory	Pembroke (R.N.S.S. Cookham)
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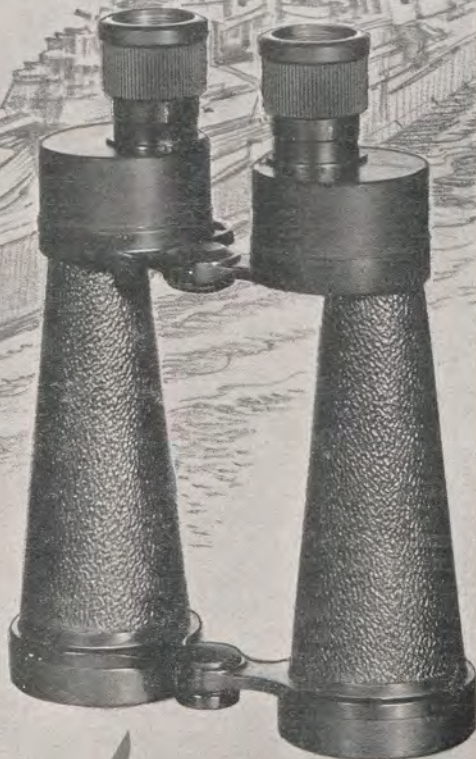
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J. R. G. TRECHMAN .. ..	Lt. Cdr.	Falcon	Mercury. Promoted Cdr.
T. W. TURNBULL .. ..	Comm. Lt.	Dryad	Drake
C. G. TONKIN .. ..	A/C.C.O.	Mercury (Qualifying Course)	Agincourt
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C. J. WHIFFIN .. ..	C.C.O.	Mercury	Promoted S.C.C.O.
P. J. WARRINGTON .. ..	Lt.	Sea Eagle	Promoted Lt. Cdr. Euryalus
P. T. WILLIAMS .. ..	Lt. Cdr.	Philomel II (R.N.Z.N.)	To revert to R.N.
Miss B. J. WOOD .. ..	1/O W.R.N.S.	Mercury	Daedalus
R. D. M. YOUNGSON .. ..	S.C.C.O., R.N.V.R.	Tyne Div., R.N.V.R.	Mercury for 14 days training
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