QUARTERDECK

The Friends of HMS Trincomalee

Autumn 2023



Silver Nail Ceremony
From Frigate to Corvette
Christmas at Sea in 1858
Dying Procedure
Mess Deck Crossword

A reminder is given of our:

Annual General Meeting 2023 Wednesday 6th December at 7.30pm Via the internet "zoom" facility

AGENDA:

- 1. Welcome and apologies for absence
- 2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 7th December 2022
- 3. Chairman's report
- 4. Treasurer's report and accounts ending 31st March 2023
- 5. Appointment of Trustees
- 6. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
- 7. Any other business (Notified to the Secretary prior to 1st November 2023)

The closing date for all nominations to be received by the Secretary was Wednesday 1st November 2023.

Those members wishing to attend the "zoom" meeting on Wednesday 6th December 2023 need to provide a contact email address for their invitation to the "zoom" meeting to be sent, this email address should be notified to:

agm2023@friendsofhmstrincomalee.org.uk

Ruth Turner, Hon. Secretary

EDITORIAL

After seeing the time-line for our ship in the last issue of Quarterdeck, a Friend, Michael Wade, sent an email to me relating to the second silver nail ceremony performed on our ship in 1999. The first few articles relate to the ceremony.

Also in 1999, a comprehensive conservation plan for HMS Trincomalee was compiled for the then Trincomalee Trust. The report included looking at the changes which would have been made to the ship in the 1840s, preparing her for her first commission, with her being transformed from a frigate to a corvette. The glossary might help some readers.

Another article discovered in our 'archives' is the black humour of 'Dying Procedure'. On a more seasonal note, 'Christmas at sea' is the full item which appeared in the 1858 issue of the magazine produced on the Thames City as she carried a group of Royal Engineers to a posting in Vancouver. The front picture is of a cavalry barracks preparing for Christmas in 1887.

Seasonal greetings to you all.

Hugh Turner

Any correspondence concerning the Friends Association should be sent to:

The Secretary, Ruth Turner Pinewood Lodge, Hude, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle, County Durham DL112 0QW Tel: 01833 640825 E-mail: secretary@friendsofhmstrincomalee.org.uk

Correspondence and contributions for the magazine to:

The Editor, Hugh Turner
Pinewood Lodge, Hude, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle,
County Durham DL12 0QW
Tel: 01833 640825 E-mail:
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Correspondence from Michael Wade 31 July 2023:

Dear Hugh,

I enjoy reading the Quarterdeck – thanks. In the last edition you make reference to the Time-line with a photograph of the 1999 silver nail ceremony – I just wanted to share a photo taken by your team of my father and I on the same day as it is special to our family.

We travelled up with our Zoroastrian Priest in order to perform the ceremony which followed the Parsi tradition. Our family name was changed from Wadia to Wade by my grandfather as they settled in London in about 1905. The original master builder Wadia building the Trincomalee/ Foudroyant in 1816 is my direct ancestor male line — I think he was my 6 x great grandfather (will have to look on our tree). Which is why we came up to Hartlepool that day.

Thought you might be interested!

Best wishes - Michael



SILVER NAIL CEREMONY

(as described by Harold Wyllie, Officer in Charge of the Foudroyant in 1940s)

The keel of Trincomalee was laid on 25th April 1816 and on 29th May the Parsi builders assembled with the Governor of Bombay and other eminent personalities to witness the ancient Zoroastrian ceremony of the silver nail, performed to ensure that her timbers should endure for many years and that her stern, the most vital part of her form, would be held by that clean and precious metal, silver.

In due course the stern was set up and a single hole bored through it to the keel to receive the silver nail. A lady chosen for her youth and beauty drove the nail home, after which the High Priest of the Parsis performed the religious ceremonies, blessing the ship and offering prayers for the future. The Governor then presented the builder Jamsetjee Bomanjee, the most famous of all the Parsi Master Builders, with a shawl. Sweetmeats were passed around and rose water was sprinkled over the timber. The silver nail, 7 inches long, had Trincomalee and the name of the fair lady engraved upon it.

Silver Nail Ceremony - 1999

Silver blessing for nation's oldest warship

The oldest British warship afloat has been officially blessed in a ceremony with an international flavour

HMS Trincomalee, an 182 year old frigate, is nearing the end of a ten year, £10m restoration in dry dock at Hartlepool Quay. The ship was built in Bombay in 1817 to help police Britain's colonies, so both English and Indian religious leaders officiated at yesterday's blessing.

And to mark the transformation of the badly rotted copper-clad teak hull, the silver nail ceremony was performed in the depths of the dry dock. An engraved, solid silver nail was hammered into the bow with a specially made wooden hammer. The nail's maker carried out the ceremonial hammering. Goldsmith Daphne Smith, the wife of the chairman of the Trincomalee Restoration Trust, was watched by, amongst others, a representative from the Indian High Commission in London, the shipwright, and two descendants from workers at the Indian shipyard which built the Trincomalee.

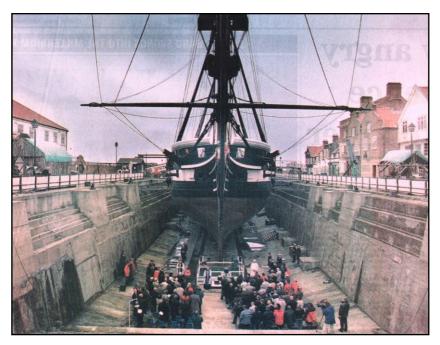


A Parsi priest lit frankincense amid a collection of articles such as a coconut and silver religious symbols as a strong North Sea gale swirled the fragrant smoke. He was joined by the Reverend Ken Cornforth, Missions to Seamen Chaplain, and Canon Ken Peters, in blessing the ship.

The project's chief shipwright Les Gilfoyle said: "I couldn't believe it when I saw the poor state of the ship when it arrived in Hartlepool from Portsmouth. It's a miracle it actually got this far. We now pray that it will actually float."

In November, the dock will be flooded and the Trincomalee will be afloat again for the first time in about five years.

Northern Echo Friday, October 22, 1999.



Picture by Mike Unwin for the Northern Echo

Mess Deck Crossword

Summer 2023 - Cryptic



From Frigate to Corvette

After her maiden voyage from Sri Lanka to Portsmouth, where she arrived on 30th April 1819, the Leda class frigate, HMS Trincomalee, spent 26 years 'in ordinary' at Portsmouth. She remained in her original form, but without masts, yards and rigging. Apart from 're-coppering' of her hull on several occasions, and any alterations that may have been needed to secure her on a mooring, and the construction of a temporary gabled roof, it is not known that any other alterations or repairs were undertaken during this time.

As a Leda class vessel, Trincomalee was originally designed to carry the following armament:

Upper deck (main de	eck) 28	18 pounder guns
Quarter deck	8	9 pounder guns
	6	32 pounder carronades
Forecastle deck	2	9 pounder guns
	2	32 pounder carronades

Total 38 guns plus 8 carronades

By the 1840s the steam frigate had ousted its sailing precursor as a first line warship, but there remained a need for a small warship that was independent of coaling depots and was capable of going anywhere in the world and cruising there indefinitely. The decision was made to build a number of corvettes for the purpose but, as a stop gap measure whilst new ones were being built, the decision was taken to adapt two frigate hulls for the purpose. Amphitrite and Trincomalee were probably chosen because, being of teak, their hulls were the best available.

In 1847 the modifications to the gun armament for Trincomalee, re-armed as a Corvette 6th rate resulted in the following armament:

Upper deck (main deck)	10	8 inch guns 65cwt 9ft long
	8	32 pounder guns 56cwt 9ft6ins long
Quarter deck	1	10 inch gun 84cwt 9ft 4 ins long
	4	32 pounder guns 39cwt 7ft 6ins long
Forecastle deck	1	10 inch gun 84cwt 9ft 4 ins long
	2	32 pounder 39cwt 7ft6ins long
Total		26 guns

<u>.....</u> <u>___ ga...</u>

Amongst the minor modifications made with the change of armament was a change in the shape of the gun-ports. On the forecastle and quarterdeck the

bulwarks were altered to accommodate the new guns and new hammock cranes were fitted.

Two major changes had to be made as a result of upgrading the armament. The most obvious was the repositioning of the fore and main masts. The foremast was moved back some four feet to accommodate the 10 inch diameter pivot gun on the forecastle and this in turn entailed changes on the main (gun) deck which included moving back the galley, fire hearth, and associated gratings as well as both pairs of mooring bits. At the same time the forecastle was extended aft by four feet to accommodate these changes.

The main mast had to be moved back in order to re-balance the plan. All the gear associated with the masts – the chains, channels, pin rails, topsail seet and jeer bits etc., would have been moved at the same time.

The shift of the foremast involved moving its step, cutting one beam on each deck into two half beams and fitting new carlings and partners, and to compensate for the cut beams an extra beam was inserted on each deck.

As the main mast was not moved as far as the foremast, it did not entail cutting beams, only the carlings and partners had to be altered.

The second change that came about as a result of altering the armament was the replacement of the old magazines and filling room by new magazines. In 1817 ships embarked their gunpowder in barrels which, in the case of frigates, were stored in the forward magazines. Cartridges were filled in the adjacent filling room and stored both there and in the after magazine. By the 1840s, ships were supplied with ready-made cartridges and the old filling rooms had become obsolete. To bring her into line with current practice, Trincomalee's forward magazine and filling room were rebuilt into one magazine, fitted solely with racks for cartridges; the after magazine being similarly equipped and having two scuttles cut through the deck above into the wardroom for handing up filled and empty cases. Parts of both magazines survive.[1988 report]

The decks themselves were modified in so far as the main hatchway was made smaller. This was because, by the 1840s ships were fitted with permanent iron tanks to carry their water supply and no longer needed a large hatchway to load the outsize casks previously used for this purpose.

Chain cable was in general use by the 1840s and so the ship was altered to accommodate it. This entailed fitting new capstans with iron gypsies to handle the cable, iron deck pipe and hawse pipes, compressors and controllers or bow stoppers, and iron heads with battledores to the mooring bitts. All these items are still on the Trincomalee with the exception of the capstan which has been temporarily removed for restoration. Chain lockers would have been fitted

alongside the well but no trace of them can be found.

The only other major structural modification was the lengthening of the quarterdeck to carry a 10-inch gun, and the consequential alteration to the stern. In 1817 ships' sterns had developed via the semi-circular stern to what had become known as the elliptical stern. Consequently, to make her appear like contemporary ships her stern was altered to look like an elliptical one, although it remained a round tuck one; only the timbers above the wing transom being altered, with a few strengthening timbers being put diagonally between the aftermost quarterdeck beams to support the 10 inch diameter pivot gun.

The bulkheads to the captain's quarters were probably re-sited at the same time, as they would have required to be easily removable when the ship was cleared for action.

The rudder head was cut off where it entered the great cabin and an iron tiller with its associated iron leading blocks was substituted for the original wooden one.

When built there would have been bread bins abreast the tiller and these must have been moved in 1847, in order to install the new iron leading blocks.

Ahead of the tiller is the wardroom. Its after and forward bulkheads date from 1845-47 although the deck cant on which the forward one stands shows marks of an earlier pillar and is probably original.

Below the lower deck the bulkhead at the forward end of the after platform and the lattice bulkheads on the orlop deck are 1847 additions. The wing pillars on the orlop are original although their horizontal battens have been crudely amputated. The sail room on the orlop has been extended forward and rollers have been fitted at the forward end, whilst the orlop deck itself had been joined to both platforms, along the sides of the ship, by carpenter's walks.

The original fore platform dropped to a lower level ahead of the filling room.

One further external change, of a minor nature, was the slight altering of the shape of the head rails, the substitution of wood for iron for the horse and the berthing up between the horse and the main rail. This was purely cosmetic to conform with the style of head in voque.

Summary:

Trincomalee was re-armed to give her improved fire-power by the capability to mount one 10 inch pivot gun forward and another aft supported by a mix of 8 inch diameter guns and 32 pounders. The total number of guns was less than

before and this accounts for the technical reason for her being classed as a corvette (6th rate) of 26 guns. Fewer guns resulted in a compensating reduction in the ship's complement to 212, although when she was commissioned for foreign service this was raised to 240.

To mount the 10 inch gun armament required the forecastle and quarterdecks respectively to be lengthened by 4 to 5 feet and the foremast and mainmast to be repositioned, thus providing room forward for the 10 inch pivoting gun and necessitating the re-balancing of the sail plan and rigging. The extra space for the after gun was achieved by changing the square transom to an elliptical stern. Improved arcs of fire for all guns was accompanied by changes to the gunports and bulwarks whilst down below the magazines and filling rooms were altered to suit the new arrangements.

At the same time changes to the capstan on the main (gun) deck to take chain cable, with associated additions of iron fairleads and bits on the cable deck, heralded another major advance in seamanship technology.

Throughout this process the ship retained her superb sea-keeping qualities and above all speed, true characteristics of the typical classic frigate. Overall she had the size, presence and qualities suitable for a Post-Captain exercising independent command on a remote foreign station.

On the 21st September 1847 Trincomalee left England under the command of Captain (later Admiral) Richard Laird Warren on her first commission which was to the North America and West Indies station.

Glossary for 'Frigate to Corvette'

(Derived from the 1815 edition of Falconer's Marine Dictionary)

CANT A term used to express the position of any piece of timber that does not stand square, and it is said then to be on the cant.

CARLINGS Short pieces of timber ranging fore and aft, from one of the deck beams to another, into which their ends are scored: they are used to sustain and fortify the smaller beams of the ship, and are exhibited in the deck. They are pieces of timber, about eight feet long and eight inches square, or more, used for framing the partners.

CARRONADE A short piece of ordnance invented by Mr. Gascoine, being much lighter than the common cannon, and having a chamber for the powder like a mortar. They are capable of carrying large balls, and are carried on the upper works, as the poop and forecastle.

CHAINS Strong links or plates of iron, the lower ends of which are bolted through the ship's side to the timbers. They are placed at short distances from each other to contain the blocks, called dead eyes, by which the shrouds of the masts are extended.

CHANNELS Broad thick planks, projecting horizontally from the ship's outside, beginning abreast of, and continuing somewhat abaft each mast. They are formed to extend the shrouds from each other, and from the axis or middle line of the ship, so as to give a greater security and support to the masts, and to prevent the shrouds from rubbing against the gun-wale.

FAIR Applied to ropes as suffering the least friction in a pulley, when they are said to lead fair.

GALLEY The name of the kitchen of a ship of war, or the place where the grates are put up, fires lighted, and the victuals generally boiled or roasted.

HAWSE Generally understood to imply the situation of the cables before the ship's stem, when she is moored with two anchors out from the bows, one on the starboard and one on the larboard [port] bow.

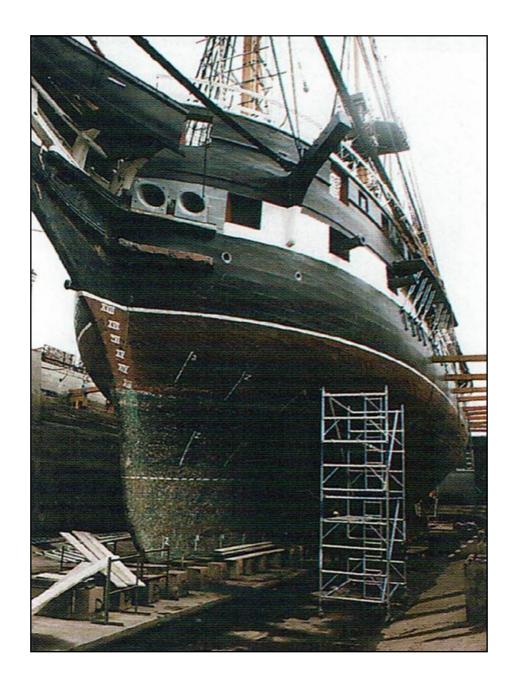
JEARS An assemblage of tackles, by which the lower yards of a ship are hoisted up along the mast to their usual station, or lowered from thence, as occasion requires; the former of which operations is called swaying, and the latter striking.

PARTNERS Pieces of plank, fastened in certain frames which surround the capstans, masts, pumps, and bowsprit, for the purpose of strengthening them, and preserving them from the effects of pressure.

Belaying PINS are pieces of wood, or iron, fixed in a rack for making fast the small running-rigging. To BELAY is to fasten a rope by winding it several times around such a pin.

SHROUDS A range of large ropes extended from the mast-heads to the right and left sides of the ship, to support the masts and enable them to carry sail, etc..

STOPPER-BOLTS Large ring-bolts, which are driven into the deck, for the use of the STOPPERS – ropes used to secure different parts of the ship such as the anchor and the rigging.



Trincomalee in Dry Dock September 1996

The Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette "Thames City," Saturday December 25th, 1858

Lat. 50.45 S. Long. 55.58 W

Another great anniversary has come round, with its heap of associations, and the recollections of happy hours spent with pleasant companions, that possess such a charm for us all and remind us so forcibly of dear old England.

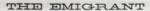
Christmas time – with its visions of roast beef and plum pudding, - holly and mistletoe, - Christmas trees and Christmas presents, - prize turkeys and prize geese, - clowns and pantomimes, - cheerful firesides and happy faces, - cold noses and hot grog.

Christmas – the time the school-boy looks forward to as the jolliest in the whole year, when he can sit sown to eat with the certainty of rising from the table with the loss of at least the three lower buttons of his waistcoat and the two upper ones of his trowsers, - when he can kiss his pretty cousin under the mistletoe, and, emboldened by sundry glasses of wine, even extend his caresses to the sly little housemaid, causing both young ladies to blush incessantly for at least a week afterwards, and to declare (although they really like it very much) that he is a "nasty rude fellow."

Christmas time, - when diminutive boys make slides on the pavement to entrap weary old gentlemen with blue noses and still bluer spectacles, and take a malicious delight in pelting policemen from round corners or behind lamp-posts with snowballs so hard as to cause temporary aberration of intellect on the part of the policemen in question, and enable their tormentors to escape with impunity.

Christmas time, - when "cabbies" stand at the corners of the streets, beating a tattoo with their hands and feet to keep themselves warm, watching their own breath as it assumes all sorts of fantastic shapes in the cold frosty air, and growling inwardly, as the foot passengers pass on heedless of their importunities, preferring the healthy air and exercise to the close and stuffy feeling of a hackney cab.

Christmas eve, - when boys go about singing Christmas carols from house to house and from street to street; boys so small that, as they huddle round your door to keep one another warm, the only fear is that, in the squeeze, one of them might get jammed in the key-hole or the letter box, but who nevertheless contrive to amass small fortunes, and forthwith proceed to invest them, not in "Three per cents,", but in mince pies, sausage rolls and ginger pop at the shop round the corner.





Gazette.

AND CAPE HORN CHRONICLE.

N.o 8.7

"THAMES CITY," SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25TH, 1858.

PRICE 3D.

The Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette.

"THAMES CITY." DECEMBER 25th, 1858,

LAT. 50.46 S. LONG. 55.58 W.

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poor are, we hope, enabled to have a better dinner than they have had for some time before, and to derive warmth and have had for some time before, and to derive warmth and comfort from hot soup and a good fire, and when all, both rich and poor, manage, in spite of the cold, to enjoy them-selves more than on any other day in the year. Such in a few words are some of the associations with Christmas day and Christmas times in old England that the recurrence of this anniversary calls forth; and while in our lonely position in the middle of the South Atlantic ocean, far away from such scene, we think of fathers and mother, brothers and sitters. scenes, we think of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, sweethearts and friends, whom we have left behind, let all derive some satisfaction from the knowledge that we too are not forgotten, and that on this day a tie of thought is as it were established and extended over thousands and thousands of miles, through which all think reciprocally of those that are near and dear to them, and look forward to a recurrence of the happy days and scenes that are associated with this the greatest of all anniversaries. We at one time expected to spend this day in the vicinity of Cape Horn, and it is there doubtless that the thoughts of all our friends in England are directed. Latterly we certainly did hope, and not without reason, (for during the whole of the past week we have only ompleted a distance of 247 miles) that we should spend it at the Falkland Islands. This pleasure the wind however has done its utmost to obviate, so under the circumstances we must make up our minds to have as jolly an evening as possible. Anyway it is some little consolation to think that, be-fore we do encounter the still colder blasts off Cape Horn, we shall have a trip on shore, to send the blood once more circulating through our veins, (an animal function that has of late ceased altogether to act except during an occasional dance) and that we shall at least have a good layer of fat beef, bottled porter, &c., to fortify our inner man. There seems to be something unnatural in separating Christmas day and Christ-mas dinner, the latter forming, as we are sure it does with most people, the staple delight of the day; but, since present circumstances must be put up with, we cannot do better than wish every one a merry Christmas day and night, with the hope that they will ere long have a real Christmas dinner at the Falkland Islands, and that we may all live long enough to enjoy in harmony and fellowship together many another tmas day in a better and more congenial spot than the South Atlantic Ocean.

THE termination of one of the epochs of man's life called a year Is an occasion, of all others, the most calculated to impress on us how stealthy, rapid, inexorable and irrevocation is the march of man's great enemy "Time." Bre our next publication is completed, the year 1858 will have ceased tobe, and, on looking back on the various events which have served to distinguish it as a truly wonderful year, we cannot refrain from briefly noticing, as one of the most important of those events, the birth and early career of the "Bmigrant Soldier" Gazette and Cape Horn Chronicle." This magnificent publi-Christmas Day, - when in England, even the poorest of the cation first saw the light at 7 p. m., on the 6th Nov. 1868

Front cover of the Christmas Day 1858 issue of the Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette

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DYING PROCEDURE

It has been brought to the notice of the Admiralty that men have been dying without the previous consent of their superior officers. This practice will cease forthwith. It must be fully understood by All Ranks that the manpower shortage is still acute, and any man dying without first obtaining permission commits a serious offence to which the only answer is disciplinary action.

The attention of All Ranks is drawn to Q.R. & A.I. 123, Art. 45.

1. Dying (the control of)

The following drill will be carried out by all members of Her Majesty's Forces:

- a) NO officer below the rank of Rear Admiral or equivalent rank may give the order to die.
 - b) The person ordered to die will in all cases be known as the 'victim'.
- c) Under no circumstances will the man be allowed to die in his own time. On receipt of orders the victim will die by numbers as follows:
- (i) The victim will step forward a full pace of 30 inches followed by 2 short paces of 27½ inches and 25 inches respectively, at the same time allowing the eyes to glaze over.
- (ii) He will sink slowly and smartly to his knees, counting out the correct pause of "two-three" then fall on his face arms out-stretched, thumbs in line with his ears.
- (iii) He will lower his legs, toes resting on the ground, heels at an angle of 30 degrees and in line with the shoulder blades.
- (iv) Then, in his own time the victim will draw his last breath, (on form S.3/10/2735) which will consist of air-scented WD Mk.1 and one of oxygen (in accordance with Naval weights and measures scales). The death rattle will not be used except on ceremonial parades.

2. General Instructions

Before dying a chart showing the route to Heaven will be drawn from the Regulating Office. There will be NO overtaking on the route. Any officer passed on the way (if any) will be paid the usual compliments. On arrival at the destination the victim will report to the Regulating Office, No. 18 Royal Angel Corps for angelification. On arrival he will draw the following items of kit:

a) Harps, Brass GS Mk. IV	1
b) Wings pair, folding flat	1
c) Clouds Fleecy, Fur-lined Mk. IV	1
d) Halo's O.R. (Silver Mk. V)	1
Halo's Officers (Gold Mk. Í)	1

- (i) Harps will be clean, bright and highly strung at all times.
- (ii) Wings will be blancoed with flickering stardust No. 3 at all times.
- (iii) Clouds will be checked for condensation and be well filled with anti-freeze when necessary.
- (iv) Halo's will be fitted by Angels Tailor. (Halo to be worn with a ten degree tilt to the rear and $3\frac{2}{3}$ inches above the left ear.)

There will be a Duty Angel in the Regulating Office at all times holding the appointment of Group Regulating Pity Officer, Angelic Group B, Class II.

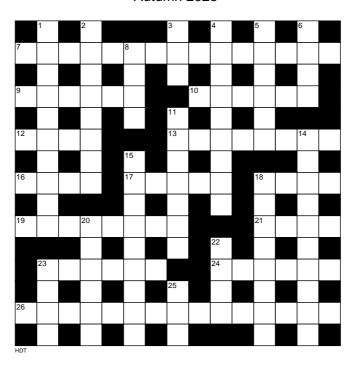
Dress: No. 2's – Wings Amidships Harps at the port.



The Sea Rangers conduct a 'singalong' in the presence of HRH Princess Margaret on board TS Foudroyant on 19th May 1950

Mess Deck Crossword

Autumn 2023



ACROSS

- **7** The 'Thames City' hoped to be here for Christmas (8,7)
- 9 Slanting text (6)
- 10 Renowned (6)
- 12 HMS Trincomalee has a silver nail in her's(4)
- 13 Conduct (8)
- 16 Go house to house singing at Christmas (4)
- **17** Jamsetjee Bomanjee was presented one at the silver nail ceremony (5)
- 18 Old term for Christmas (4)
- **19** One was bestowed on HMS Trincomalee at a 1999 ceremony (8)
- 21 HMS Trincomalee originally made from this wood (4)
- 23 Rock-forming mineral composed of silica (6)
- 24 Whalebone (6)
- 26 In the 1840s these were added to HMS Trincomalee's orlop deck (10,5)

DOWN

- 1 Where HMS Trincomalee was restored (10)
- 2 Small four-stringed guitars (8)
- 3 Lyric poem (3)
- 4 Could be avoided (9)
- 5 Sung at Christmas (6)
- 6 Difference in favour of one against another(4)
- 8 Flex (4)
- 11 Alien (7)
- **14** American ship captured by HMS Shannon in 1813 (10)
- **15** Helping (9)
- 18 Blurry (3,5)
- 20 Seafood (6)
- 22 Tides (4)
- 23 HMS Trincomalee is at an historic one (4)
- 25 Wooden leg (3)



Some Royal Visitors to the Historic Quay & HMS Trincomalee



