



# Quarterdeck

The Newsletter of The Friends of HMS Trincomalee

February 1994

## TRINCOMALEE TO BE CENTREPIECE OF HARTLEPOOL HISTORIC QUAY

HMS Trincomalee is to be at the centre of Hartlepool's new Historic Quay, now under construction close to the restoration site in the Jackson Dock.

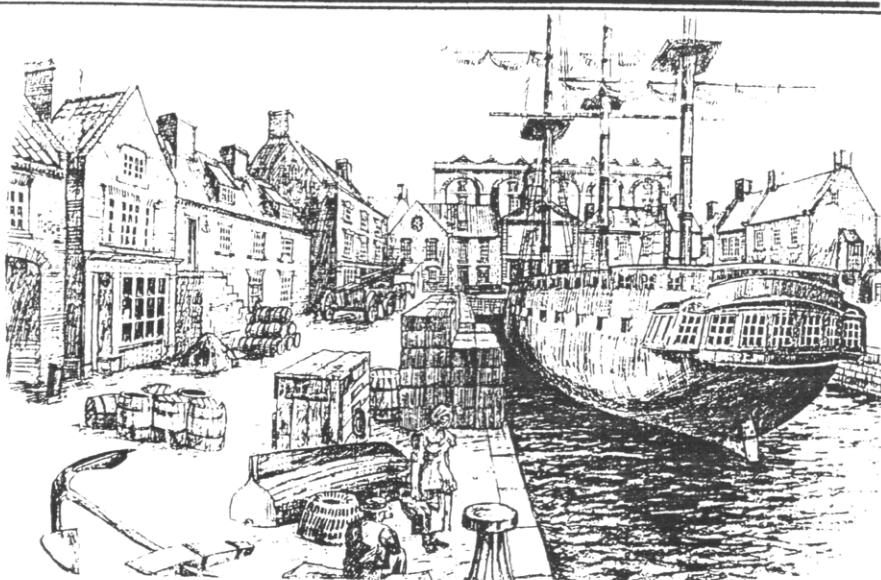
The Historic Quay development will include reconstructions of 18th Century Buildings, including period Shipchandlers, Gunsmiths, Swordsmiths and Naval Outfitters' shops, A Naval Architect's, A Poor House and a number of other typical quayside buildings, all of which will help to create an authentic setting for the restored frigate.

The multi-million pound scheme is part of the Flagship Project of Teesside Development Corporation, and will be at the hub of a complex including Hartlepool Marina, retail and leisure centres in addition to 750 homes and the proposed Imperial War Museum.

The Development Corporation are expecting as many as 1 million visitors annually to the Marina Complex.

### 'Fighting Ships' Experience

In addition to visiting HMS TRINCOMALEE, visitors will be able to see a reconstruction of parts of the ship incorporated into one of the quayside buildings, where the 'Fighting Ships' Exhibition is intended to provide a vivid impression of life in Nelson's Navy. Special audio-visual effects should make this a memorable experience. A leaflet enclosed with this Newsletter gives further details of the Quayside Development which is expected to be opened in July 1994.



Artist's Impression reproduced by kind permission of Teesside Development Corporation

## RESTORATION WORK CONTINUES DURING SITE MOVE

Visitors to the ship during the last six months will have noticed that there have been dramatic shoreside changes at the restoration site. Since the end of the summer, the Project Offices have been uprooted and replaced away from the site of the new Historic Quay development.

The old stone Fitting-Out Shed at the edge of Jackson Dock has been dismantled and the Project's Workshops have been re-housed in a new building which once formed part of James Graham & Co's Timber Yard.

The Project Team, who have stoically undertaken these moves, are now having to endure the constant passage of construction traffic engaged in the Historic Quay development next door whilst a few hundred yards to the west the civil engineers building the new bridge and approach roads to the Marina have kept the staff entertained with pile-driving, earthmoving and concrete pumping.

In spite of all this the restoration of the ship has been making steady progress. The first two phases involving work on the framing and hull planking are now complete, and restoration of the fore and aft ends of the ship is now under way. Working platforms have been constructed at both ends of the hull. A thorough investigation of the ship's structure and lining is being made during this process.

The ship's stern galleries are being photographed, and templates are being prepared prior to the galleries being removed for full restoration. These photographs and templates will be invaluable in the subsequent replacing of the gallery structure.

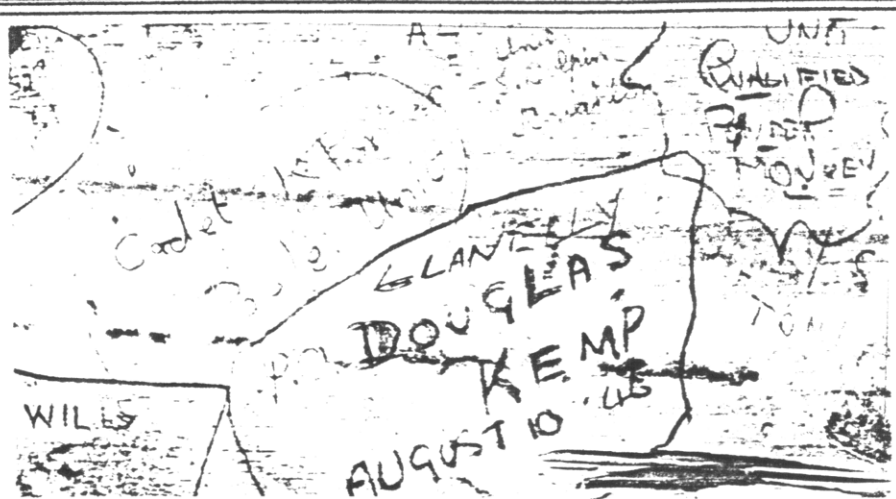
Meantime, the newly replaced Outer Hull Planking is being painted and restoration is continuing in the Gun Deck and elsewhere in the ship. The Lower Mainmast structure has been assembled and is now awaiting the fitting of its Timber Bibs and Paunch Pieces. Construction of the Crosstrees is already complete and timber for the fighting top is in stock.

## Class of '46 - Where are they now?

During the removal of what was once the forward heads in late 1993, the restoration team uncovered a plank bearing assorted graffiti dating back to 1946 whilst the ship was in Portsmouth.

The names are still quite legible, and the plank has been kept in the hope that some of those who scribbled on it thirty eight years ago might like to see it. No disciplinary action will be taken against the miscreants. Many of the authors gave the names of their units, and the Editor would very much like to hear from anyone who knows of the present whereabouts of any of the following. The more printable comments are also reproduced below.....

A B Daniel, Hayes & Harlington Unit  
Cadets T & R Porter, Poole Unit  
P O Ford, Nuneaton Unit - 'left this heavenly ship  
3 8 46'  
R Wills  
L S Low, 55 Unit, T S Dolphin, Brighton  
P O Douglas Kemp, Llanelly, August 10 '46  
L S Tony Savory  
L S Hutley & L S Hawkins, Luton, 20-27 July  
O'Donovan, Widnes Unit  
Cadet A B McEwan  
L S K W Marsh, Ex SCCC  
L S Stray, July 20-27, A/B Marco, Luton  
R Anderson, Lambeth, London  
J R Quinn, Ramsay, Isle of Man, Feb 1946  
'first & last visit to the bughole'  
A B Leavis, T/S Sherborne, Bham  
J I Lambeth, Luton Unit, Beds, 'passed away 2nd  
March 1946 age 15 yrs 9 months'  
Cadet L S James Cruickshank, Prestonpans 403  
Unit - 'abandon hope all ye who enter in'  
T S Ark Royal  
K M Cleland, Ealing Unit, Middx, April 17 1946  
L S Boswell, T S Kent, Chislehurst  
N Travis, Newcastle, 7.12.46  
Holyhead Unit, TS ...ona, 16-23 Feb 1946  
W Cochran, Ayr, June 16th '46  
O S Leslie Cate..., Scunthorpe 1946



## OPEPE AND IROKO REPLACE TEAK

Where it has proved necessary to replace damaged or rotted timbers during the restoration of the Framing and Hull Planking of the ship, two varieties of tropical hardwood have been used as an alternative to the original teak, now almost impossible to obtain in the sizes needed, even if the price were affordable.

**Iroko** (*Chlorophora excelsa*) is a fine hardwood, loosely called 'African Teak' but of quite a different family. It does resemble Indian Teak in colour, and weighs about 42 lb per cubic foot. It is a moderately hard, very durable timber of fairly open grain, forms strong and reliable joints and is often used as a substitute for teak as it is extremely durable.

**Opepe** (*Sarcocephalus diderrichii*) is a heavier wood than Iroko at about 46 lbs per cubic foot with a rather coarse texture and normally with interlocked grain. It is claimed that Opepe is easily worked, though it may have a tendency to split in nailing, but like Iroko and Teak it has a good resistance to rot and fungal attack. The shipwrights engaged in the restoration have followed exactly the same patterns of jointing as did the

original Bombay craftsmen, though the wrought iron bolts which were used in the original construction have been replaced where necessary with stainless steel.

Visitors to the ship never fail to be impressed with the sheer size of some of the timbers used in Trincomalee's construction - notably in the bow and stern sections. It is remarkable to think that these were cut and shaped by hand at the Wadia shipyard, using hand saws, axes and adzes. Teak is not one of the easiest hardwoods to work, though as a constructional timber its only rival was the British oak. In addition to its high resistance to crushing and transverse strain, and its durability in alternate wet and dry conditions it has very high fire-resisting qualities.

## Lost & Found

During restoration work on the port side of the hull, forward of midships, a silver coin was discovered just below the level of the lower deck.

Hartlepool Museum Service were able to identify the coin as a Peruvian One Real piece (One Escudo = 16 Reals) dated 1816 and issued during the reign of King Ferdinand VII of Peru (he was also King of Spain). Although no one can say for certain how the coin got into this inaccessible place, it may date from the time of the ship's call at Callao, Peru, in early 1854 where she took on provisions whilst serving on the Pacific Station.

## BAFM: The British Association of Friends of Museums

The Friends of HMS Trincomalee are affiliated to the British Association of Friends of Museums. This organisation exists to assist and encourage existing Friends and similar Voluntary Organisations and has 255 member groups representing about 170,000 enthusiasts. It publishes a quarterly Broadsheet and an Annual Newsletter 'Museum Visitor' which contain a great deal of helpful and informative information for 'Friends' organisations as well as news of other groups' activities. More about the activities of groups with similar interests to ours will appear in future editions of Quarterdeck.

## SMALL ARMS OF HMS TRINCOMALEE: THE 1804 PATTERN NAVAL CUTLASS

The cutlass, usually described by the British Admiralty as a "Sword for Sea Service" or "Sword, Naval" was a cheap cutting weapon supplied for the use of seamen.

Although cutlasses had been supplied from the very earliest times to ships of the Royal Navy, little is known of official patterns (if indeed there were any) until the early 19th century.

The "two-disc" hilted cutlass, with a sheet iron hilt formed as two connected discs and shaped to act as a guard and knucklebow, was in use during the second half of the 18th century in both naval and merchant ships with a variety of different blade types.

In 1804 the Board of Ordnance, which was responsible for supplying small arms to the British Navy, ordered 10,000 Swords for Sea Service made to a pattern suggested by the London Sword-cutler Henry Osborn. These were to have a straight, single-edged blade 29" long and a "two-disc" hilt with a ribbed iron grip and the price was fixed at 4/11d (25p) each, with leather scabbards to be supplied at 2/3d (11p) each.

Forty years later, the Board of Ordnance claimed that the design had been agreed conjointly with Lord Nelson, but it is more than likely that they were confusing his Lordship's name with that of R.A. Nelson, the Secretary to the Navy Board.

In 1808 20,000 more cutlasses of this pattern were ordered, and further quantities were purchased up to 1816. The orders were placed with a number of swordmakers in London and Birmingham, including Henry Osborn.

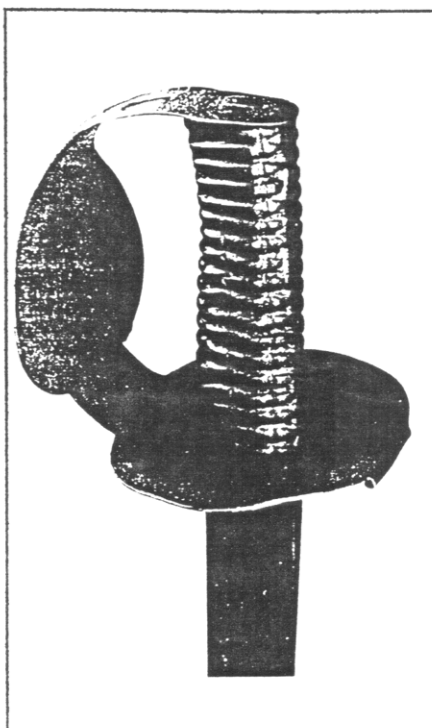
After the end of the Napoleonic wars

no further orders were placed, and although several trials were carried out by the Royal Navy on experimental cutlass designs it was not until 1841 that a new design was approved by the Admiralty and further weapons were ordered. It is therefore likely that the 1804 pattern was in general use well into the 1850s, when they were superseded by the steel basket-hilted cutlass.

Cutlasses led a hard life onboard ship, exposed to the salt sea air, and most examples are moderately rust pitted as a result. The hilts and grips were usually painted black before issue.

Cutlasses ceased to be issued to the Royal Navy in October 1936 following Admiralty Fleet Order No. 4572, the last pattern having been adopted in 1900.

The author has a Pattern 1804 Cutlass on loan to the Trincomalee Visitors' Centre. Members wishing to examine it should brandish their 'Friends' Membership Card and ask Ship's Warden Brian Hopkins *very* politely.



The 1804 Pattern Cutlass

TRINCOMALEE in the news.....

## SPELLING BEES AT THE TEMPERANCE HALL

The following advertisement appeared in the pages of the CLEVELAND MERCURY of February 9th 1876:

### PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

### TWO GRAND NAUTICAL SPELLING BEES,

under the patronage of the MAYOR (George Horsley Esq., J.P.) and Captain CURTIS, R.N., H.M.'s Training Ship *Trincomalee*.

The First will be held on TUESDAY, March 7th, in the TEMPERANCE HALL, HARTLEPOOL.

The RECTOR will preside.

Alderman JAMES GROVES, Esq., J.P., has kindly promised to read 'A Sailor's Love Yarn' on the occasion.

Mr HOGGETT will superintend the Music.

Valuable Prizes for public competition. Special Prizes for Sailors, Pilots and Fishermen. Juvenile Prizes. Special one for the Sons and Daughters of Seamen. For Particulars see Bills &c.

The Second Nautical Spelling Bee will take place at the ATHANAEUM, WEST HARTLEPOOL. For date &c., see Bills &c.

The proceeds will be devoted to the Missions to Seamen Society's work at the Hartlepoons.

The Spelling Bee was a popular pastime in Victorian England, where competitors would spell increasingly difficult words before an appreciative audience in the hopes of winning 'valuable prizes'. This was evidently considered to be excellent entertainment whilst at the same time being highly educational. Perhaps these were the precursors of the present day 'TV Quiz Shows', which are not always quite so educational.

Just how valuable were the Prizes at the Temperance Hall - and who won them? More importantly, how did Alderman Groves' recitation of 'A Sailor's Love Yarn' go down with the Ladies? Fortunately, the reporters of the Cleveland Mercury were extremely thorough, and a full report of the proceedings duly appeared on March 11th 1876.

Details of this will appear in the next issue of our Newsletter.

## Trincomalee in the News: The Remarkable Affair at West Hartlepool Docks

*'An accident of an unprecedented character occurred at West Hartlepool on Tuesday morning, May 9th, during the small hours, which for a time threatened to entail incalculable mischief, and, until the hour of danger had really passed, produced the utmost consternation amongst those concerned....'*

So read the local papers in May 1876 following an unusual incident when a Norwegian vessel, the **Europa**, inward from Pensacola with Timber, grounded in the Jackson Dock Locks shortly after High Water at 0351 hrs.

'The greatest alarm was created by this accident. Four tugs tried in vain to tow her clear.' In spite of the efforts of the docks officials, the Coal Dock and Jackson Docks ran down with the tide to a depth of no more than three to four feet. There was, not unnaturally, a great deal of anxiety - not only for the ships, which were liable to list severely as they took the ground, but also for the warehouses alongside the quays which it was feared might collapse if the dock walls had the restraining force of the water removed from them.

Several ships were in fact damaged, including Mr Isaac Bedlington's ship **Deodar** which '*...was made to feel the weight of Her Majesty's Training Ship Trincomalee which lay next to her, having speedily settled down after the accident.*'

'Still', the report continues, '*some relief was afforded her by the crew of Trincomalee, who kept their ship in as upright a position as they could by means of mooring chains and manifold warps. The circumstances, we understand, have been reported to the Admiralty, and it is feared that some of her timbers have been loosened. Fortunately there have been no other mishaps that we have heard of. The warehouses have not fallen down. The occasion, on the*

*other hand, has been seized as a favourable opportunity for doing some necessary repairs under the watermark. The Europa was lightened of her deck cargo - about 100 loads - and floated on the return tide on Tuesday afternoon between three and four o'clock. She is a vessel of 648 tons, but being copper bottomed she will have escaped with comparatively little injury.'*

Unfortunately the papers do not disclose what damage, if any, **Trincomalee** suffered. It would have been interesting to hear the Admiralty's comments on the incident. Mr Isaac Bedlington's little **Deodar** however was '*very severely damaged*' in spite of the efforts of **Trincomalee's** crew, and Mr Bedlington was one of those who lodged '*substantial claims*' with the Dock Company.

The Newspapers cheerfully conclude that '*there is little doubt...that the entire circumstances will come under review in a court of law.*' It seems that **Trincomalee's** berth in those days was close to the West Dock Gates, so she would have had a grandstand view of the excitement.

**Trincomalee** appears to have become well established in the community of The Hartlepoons during her earlier stay in the port and her officers and men played an active role in the towns' activities. The next issue will examine the evidence of genuine dismay felt in the local community when she left in 1877 after 14 years in the port.

## TRINCOMALEE III and her forbears

The HMS **TRINCOMALEE** that we are all familiar with was not, in fact, the first British Naval vessel to bear that name and was almost not the last.

The First **TRINCOMALEE** was a Sloop of 16 guns, captured from the French, which entered service with the British Navy in 1799. Her service was regrettably brief,

however, as she was lost whilst engaging the French Privateer **IPHIGENIE** on October 12th that same year in the Bab el Mandeb Straits.

The second **TRINCOMALEE** was another sloop, originally the French **GLOIRE** of 10 guns, captured by the British in 1801. In 1803 she was recaptured by her original owners and renamed **EMILIEN**, but changed hands again on September 25th 1806 when she surrendered to HMS **Culloden** and re-entered service with the British Navy as HMS **TRINCOMALEE**.

Our own **TRINCOMALEE** is the last to bear the name, though it is said that there might easily have been another, as the name was allocated to a Destroyer to have been built on the Clyde in 1945. The end of World War II prompted the cancellation of the order and the name was never used.

More will be revealed about the history of the first and second **TRINCOMALEEs** in future issues.

## Opening Times

HMS **TRINCOMALEE** is open to the public between 1.00 and 5.00 pm Mondays to Fridays and from 10.00 am to 4.30 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Groups may be accommodated at other times by prior arrangement. Please contact the Project Office (0429 223193) for further details.

Quarterdeck is produced by The Friends of HMS **Trincomalee**, Post Office Box 1817, Hartlepool TS 24 7YE

