

# *Quartermasterdeck*

FRIENDS OF HMS TRINCOMALEE

---

SPRING 2005





# Krimo's

*Celebrating 20 amazing years!*

**Two Amazing Restaurants  
serving the same recipe:**

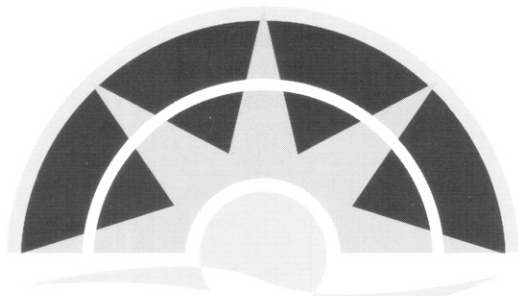
Good Food • Attentive Service  
• Fantastic Atmosphere •

01429 266166

**krimos.co.uk**

01429 266120

## **The Centre of attention in Hartlepool**



**Middleton Grange**  
SHOPPING CENTRE HARTLEPOOL

Easy to get to  
Choice of 140 shops  
1200 parking spaces  
Mall cafés

**Now open  
Sundays  
10am – 4pm**

**FOR THOSE IN THE KNOW**

---

## *Welcome to the New Year*

---

Thank goodness Christmas is over!!!! Seriously we had a lovely Christmas and New Year and I and the Committee of the Friends Association hope that you all did and didn't have too much damage done recently with the high winds and horrible weather. We can only hope that now the nights are getting lighter we can look forward to a lovely spring and summer.

You will have noticed that the picture on the front cover of Quarterdeck has been changed for this year. It is now of the busthead. I wrote to the Admiral Superintendent of the Naval Dockyard in Bombay, Vice Admiral SKK Krishnan AVSM, VSM in October last year asking if he or one of his colleagues could write an article for the magazine on the history of the Bombay dockyard and HMS Trincomalee. I received a letter from the Superintendent in early January saying that he had requested Captain Ramesh Babu, a Deputy General Manager, who looks after the heritage aspects of the dockyard to write the article. At the time of going to print this article has not yet arrived but it will be published in a later magazine (that's a promise). The Superintendent also asked that we keep him informed of any of our activities. That's good isn't it?

So onto the magazine – the usual articles are in. Bryn has written an update of the Trust's Log and of course there is a piccy from the last Trafalgar Night celebrations. Please take note of the dates for your diary – there are some good talks and events on the horizon. The talks are now regularly bringing in 30 to 40 people, Friends and non Friends, who are thoroughly enjoying them. The talk lasts for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour and then there's coffee and relaxing talk amongst friends afterwards and you never know you could win a raffle prize.

The two main articles, however, are from Richard Hunter who is a figurehead historian and a fully paid up member of the Friends of HMS Trincomalee with an appropriate article about the busthead and one from Gary Kester, a man of many talents. Gary designed the HMS Trincomalee web site and is a keen film buff. He has written an article for us about the use of frigates in big and small screen films. A truly interesting read.

So on with the show and let's look forward to all the good things coming up this year.

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

**The Secretary, Ian Purdy,  
39 The Poplars, Wolviston, Billingham TS22 5LY  
Tel: 01740 644381**

*Membership matters directed to:*

**Membership Secretary, Keith Rogers,  
Tanglewood, Manor Garth Drive, Hartlepool, TS26 0LT  
Tel: 01429 266126**

*Correspondence and contributions for the magazine to:*

**The Editor, c/o HMS Trincomalee, Jackson Dock, Hartlepool, TS24 0SQ**

---

# *Figureheads and Trincomalee*

---

In the Summer of 1999 at a workshop in the village of Holsworthy, just over 5 months of arduous work was coming to a satisfactory conclusion. Richard Barnett, a local Devon woodcarver with an international reputation and gift for carving the unusual, was putting the finishing touches to a vast replica figurehead for the British Naval frigate HMS Trincomalee, which was then under restoration at the Jackson Dock in Hartlepool.

Few carvers are fortunate enough to be given such a fascinating and unique opportunity to demonstrate an almost lost skill – that of replicating a figurehead of this size and this importance. For centuries, ship's figureheads fastened high above the waves on the bow of a vessel, had played an important part in the folklore and traditions of the sea. It's a craft that can be traced back to the ancient Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, although little is known about the origins of such carvings. It had probably some kind of religious meaning, the figureheads being placed at the bow of the vessel to pacify and assuage the troubled spirits of the sea. Certainly centuries later the figurehead appeased the sailors' superstitions and fear of the unknown and no matter how small and insignificant, any figurehead was better than no figurehead at all.

It's possible that the first figureheads seen off the coast of Devon belonged to Roman trading vessels working their way around the coast, but by the 19th century, they could be found on almost every vessel at sea, from the small local trading schooners of the West Country to the full rigged ships or speedy clippers trading from the great ports of London, Liverpool and Bristol. The clippers were built for speed, racing home from China full of tea and each figurehead was carved, often reflecting the name of the vessel and resulted in a plethora of ladies and gentlemen dressed in their colourful best, many of whom can still be seen today in maritime museums and private collections around the world.

During the restoration of HMS Trincomalee the figurehead was examined and was originally thought that the original carving on the bow would remain on the vessel throughout the full restoration programme. Subsequent investigation, however, discovered an unacceptable amount of rot infecting both the bow area and the back of the figurehead. The Trustees decide to remove the figurehead and replace it with a replica.

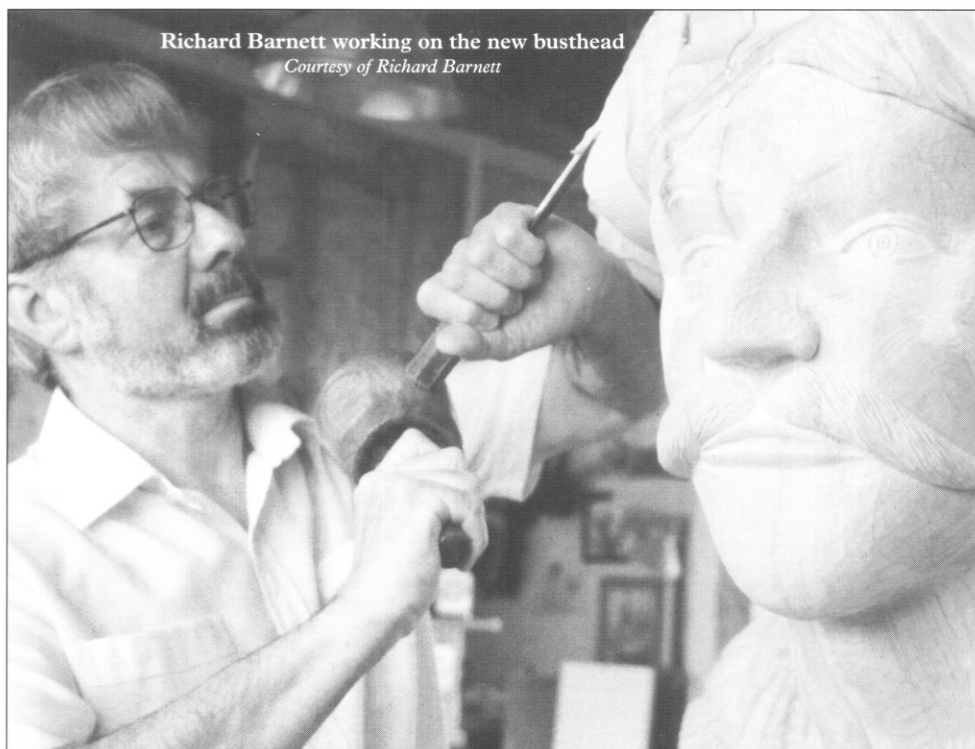
Figurehead carving as a commercial trade had ceased to be viable from around the end of the 19th century, when traditional sailing ships were superseded by steam. Though not entirely a lost art form, the carving of ships' figureheads, using wood of the necessary size, has its own particular construction problems. The Trust was fortunate in that Richard Barnett had already carried out a certain amount of decorative carved work around the stern of the vessel, and had also previously worked on the restoration of HMS Warrior – also at the Hartlepool yard. Once the original figurehead had been removed from the bow it was taken to Richard's workshop at Holsworthy where it would serve as a model for recreating the replica.

The original figurehead had cost £12. Created for the British Admiralty by a

member of the famous Hellyer family of ship carvers, it was typical of the three quarter bust carving used on all vessels of this size and design. Incredibly for the Trustees the original carver's sketch showing the design for the figurehead had also survived the Admiralty archives at Kew, and show what is described as "A bush head with 2 drops". It is thought to represent Jamsetjee Bomanjee, the ship's Parsee builder, and shows a fine Indian face with dark skin, full moustache and bright eyes, wearing a traditional turban entwined with a string of beads or pearls. The figure wears a simple white garment decorated around the neck and arms with gold beads set against a green background, and a rich red mantle over the shoulders leads down to a base of the figurehead and the bow.

The reconstruction was a massive job, working with twenty cubic feet of two foot Quebec Yellow Pine boards, glued with Balctotan 100 and weighing in at just over a quarter of a ton. Richard also had to consider rectifying a misalignment shown by the original, which had been damaged at some stage of the vessel's career so that the turban was lopsided, but fortunately it was a problem which proved to be easily rectified.

**Richard Hunter**, *Figurehead Historian and Friend of HMS Trincomalee*



**Richard Barnett working on the new busthead**

*Courtesy of Richard Barnett*

*This article was written by Richard some time ago but he suggested as the new front cover was to be a picture of the busthead then it was worth re-incarnating the article which he thought would be of interest to all Friends.*

*Richard has a web site [www.figureheads.co.uk](http://www.figureheads.co.uk) which readers may wish to look at. He has also written a vast number of articles of the subject of figureheads for magazines and newspapers around the world and has lectured on the subject to associations around the UK.*

---

## *News, Happenings and Events*

---

Last Summer I announced in Quarterdeck that James Atkinson had successfully obtained £4834 from Awards for All to help the Friends have necessary items for Friends events. All the money has now been spent!!! Hoorah!! The Friends now have 5 banqueting tables, 30 chairs, a PA system, two banners, an awning which has just been delivered and will be used on the Quarterdeck, two filter making coffee machines, ancillary cup holders and throw away cups and an independent small CD system for background music for small events.

The Friends Committee is hoping to instigate new events this year as well as maintaining the Summer Soiree and helping with Trafalgar Night. (Last year these two events raised £1800) There will be a small working group to look at the possibility of new events and integrating events with those at the Historic Quay.

The aim of the Friends of HMS Trincomalee is to help support the workings of the Trust. Bryn asked the committee if they would help to support the balance of funding required for the new rigging. The committee agreed to fund £1000 with the provision that if a further £1000 was needed then that would also be made available. It is also hoped that in the new scenario at the Historic Quay the Friends could also help in the interpretation of the Ship on the quayside or on the Ship as it did with one of the officer's cabins.

- ❖ All T shirts have now been sold but it is hoped that T Shirt 2005 will be available soon.
- ❖ The Trincomalee button badge is still available in the Shipshop and on Friends Talk nights – price £3.50. Have you bought one????



***Trafalgar  
Night 2004***  
*From left to right  
Vice Admiral  
Neil Rankin,  
Commodore  
Paul Sutermeister  
and  
Colonel  
Michael Stewart  
- Courtesy  
Jean Hughes*

## *Dates for the Diary*

Talks are in the Captain's Cabin and begin at 7.00pm. Coffee and biscuits are available after the talk. Talks are FREE to Friends but non Friends pay £1.00. There is always a RAFFLE!!

**February 24 AGM PLUS "Fire from the Mist"** Gary Kester and friends from the Heugh Battery (IN UNIFORM) will be giving a talk and bring examples of firepower. General Haigh will also be present!!

❖ **Please note that this begins at 6.45pm**

**April 7** **Tales from the Outer Hebrides** Ken Watson

**May 19** **The Other Trafalgar** Alan White and Mike Lister  
(Manor College)

**June 4** **Summer Soiree** (details will be sent under separate cover)

❖ Advance notification

**TRAFALGAR NIGHT**

**Saturday October 22 2005**

## *Licensed Raffle*

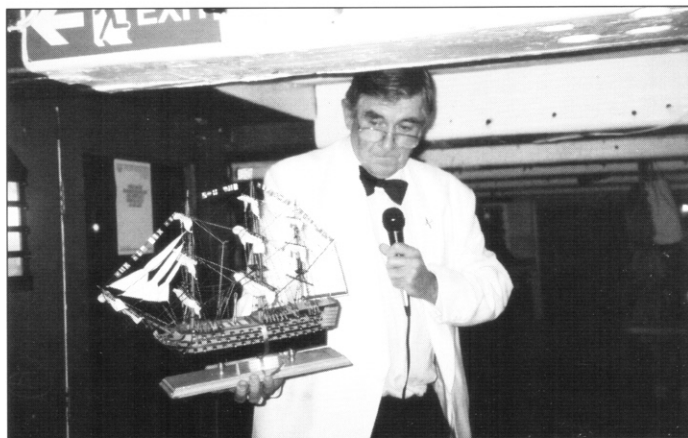
Tickets are now available for a major raffle sponsored by the Friends. The draw will take place on Taranto Evening which will be held on board ship on 11 November 2005. Tickets are £1.00 each in books of 5. Three books are enclosed with this magazine – so please try and sell them to your friends and family. All proceeds to the HMS Trincomalee. (which is what the Friends are all about)

1st PRIZE 18" limited edition model in glass case of HMS Victory from Nauticalia

2nd PRIZE 11" scale model of an 18lb Naval Cannon made from the teak of HMS Trincomalee (this was donated to the Friends in 1993)

3rd PRIZE 9" Model of HMS Victory

4th PRIZE 5" Model of HMS Victory



*Andrew Linsley  
holding the model of  
HMS Victory the 1st prize  
in the licensed raffle  
Courtesy of  
HMS Trincomalee Trust*

## *Trincomalee Facts – Do You Know that:*

- The word Foudroyant is French and comes from foudroyer, to strike with lightning – a good name for a fighting ship.
- The first 80 gun ship of the Royal Navy was the French Ship Foudroyant which was captured by the British on 29 February 1758.
- This Foudroyant had been built in Toulon and launched in 1750.
- Admiral John Jervis was its Captain at the battle of Ushant.
- The ship was broken up in 1787.
- A new Foudroyant was launched at Plymouth on 31 March 1798. It was 2062 tons, 184 feet in length, had a beam of 52 feet 6 inches and carried 80 guns.
- It was this Foudroyant that became Nelson's flagship on 8 June 1799.
- She served as Nelson's Flagship during the recapture of Naples and in August he was created Duke of Bronte by the King of Naples.
- Bronte is a Greek word meaning thunder and Lady Hamilton gave Nelson the title "Lord Thunder".
- In 1892 HMS Foudroyant was bought by Mr Geoffrey Wheatley Cobb for £5500. He also spent a further £3400 in restoration. The Ship was used as a working ship, touring coastal resorts under tow and training boys.
- HMS Foudroyant was wrecked on Blackpool beach on 16 June 1897 due to sailing close to a lee shore with insufficient competent hands on board.
- The copper from the HMS Foudroyant was sent to the Birmingham Mint where, between 1897 and 1905, 25000 medals commemorating Nelson and his Flagship were struck (see page opposite).
- HMS Trincomalee was bought by Geoffrey Wheatley Cobb in 1905 to replace Nelson's flagship and was renamed Foudroyant in honour of the previous ship.
- In June 1992 during the restoration at Hartlepool the Ship reverted to her original name of HMS Trincomalee.

*Facts supplied by Chris Bowers, Friend of HMS Trincomalee*

Chris recommends you look at [www.nmm.ac.uk/](http://www.nmm.ac.uk/) for further information concerning Foudroyant.





# *Trust's Log*

There has been a lot for us to be considering in the Trust over the winter months as the plans for closer partnership working with Hartlepool Borough Council at the Historic Quay have been progressing. Friends will appreciate that an important responsibility of the Trust is to ensure that there is financial stability to safeguard the huge investment already made in the restoration of HMS Trincomalee, and that it can continue to maintain the Ship and present her for the public's education and enjoyment. As I mentioned in the last Trust's Log, the Trustees are convinced that the best way to do this is to develop a partnership with the Council and market our waterside land at Jackson Basin for development to provide an on-going income to the Trust.

Within the Quay itself there are a number of interesting challenges, not least of which is to find a name and branding that can encapsulate in one, the Ship, Historic Quay and Museum of Hartlepool. There is a tendency these days to go for 'descriptive' titles – Locomotion, Conkers, Techniquet etc – all of which whet the appetite for visitors to find out more. At the time of writing we are in the midst of this exercise, and the plan is to launch the name and branding with a single ticket for entry across all the facilities on Good Friday, 25 March. The race is on!

At the same time we are working with the Council in the preparation for the variety of capital schemes being planned as an integral part of the overall development. For example, there is an opportunity for further smallish exhibitions, a re-vamp of the interpretation within the Ship herself, as well as the very practical considerations of having an indoor workshop for the maintenance of the Ship and an administrative base for the Trust!

We are also considering the longer-term replacement for the damboard that retains the water in the Dock and separates the Ship from the waters of Jackson Basin. The damboard is not a satisfactory closure system and the Trust believes that a traditional caisson is the answer to retain the historical integrity of the Dock, for future flexibility and promotional opportunities, and to aid the conservation of the Ship when she needs turning. At some time, of course, the Dock itself will undoubtedly need maintenance work, which will mean the Ship will have to exit. As with all these development items, however, there are significant costs involved which between the Trust and the Council we are going to have to address. They are not going to happen overnight, but we do now have an exciting and attainable plan. Watch this space!

As a separate plan the Trust will be replacing the upper rigging with man-made cordage and fitting the remaining upper yards in 2005. The upper rigging was placed in 1996 and is now showing signs of advanced weathering degradation. With additional weight aloft it will be necessary to increase the ballasting of the Ship by around 50 tons. We are most grateful to Corus Special Profiles at Skinningrove who have donated steel bar for this purpose and to Heerema Hartlepool Ltd, the offshore construction company, where Apprentices are cutting the steel so that we can

eventually stow it in the Hold. The Trust has a reserve of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for much of this work, but we shall need to raise a further £15k in the coming months in order to complete the funding package. The Friends have very kindly offered to donate £1k towards this target with an option to increase the contribution. Thank you very much.

The December Board Meeting celebrated the 50th Meeting under the HMS Trincomalee Trust. In June 1992 the assets of the Foudroyant Trust were formally transferred to the new Trust. The main asset, of course, was the Ship. The Deed of Transfer notes that this important transaction was made for '£1 and a glass of Port'. The Chairman in December offered a toast in port to the future of the HMS Trincomalee Trust – but nobody threw in a pound this time!

It is pleasing to report that TyneTees TV has made a documentary about Collingwood which will be transmitted in the region on 22 March at 7.30pm. A good deal of the programme was recently filmed on board HMS Trincomalee, and we understand that the programme will also go out on the History Channel in due course.

Finally, with 2005 being a special year for the celebration of the sea, we are planning a major Tall Ships event over the weekend of 23/24 July. In conjunction with the Council and several other partners it is expected that a good number of these wonderful craft will stop-off at the Hartlepool Marina prior to assembling at Newcastle for the last leg of the Tall Ships Race 2005. Put the date in your diary and don't forget your camera!

**Bryn Hughes**, *General Manager, HMS Trincomalee Trust*



*Commemorative photograph of HMS Trincomalee Trustees for their 50th meeting December 2004  
Courtesy of HMS Trincomalee Trust*

# Frigates on Film

The place: the quarterdeck of the Royal Navy frigate *Venus* – the situation: the inappropriately monikered Captain Fearless has just ordered his second-in-command to turn the ship around and flee from an approaching Spanish Man O'War. "Retreat, Sir?" stuttered the shocked officer. "But the *Venus* has never run away from action before. We're all very proud of her magnificent record of victories and the gallant men who fought with her. I mean, look Sir - that plate on the deck is where her last captain fell!"

"I'm not surprised," drawled Fearless, "I nearly tripped over the wretched thing myself..."

As portrayed by the inimitable Kenneth Williams in the 1964 film **Carry On Jack**, Captain Fearless is a far cry from the heroic stoicism of Russell Crowe's Jack Aubrey in the 2003 adaptation of Patrick O'Brien's **Master and Commander** series, but he does at least prove that the latter film isn't (as its DVD tries to imply) the first movie to be set almost exclusively on a classic masted frigate.

Our favourite type of warship has, in fact, been a feature of motion picture maritime studies since very literally the dawn of film. For example, ringing box office tills in 1898 was **Boston Navy Yard**, offering as it did a single brief shot of a fine array of vintage vessels as seen from the deck of a harbour tugboat. Hardly **Gone with the Wind** then, but with audiences of the time still dumbstruck by the very novelty of the new medium, many thousands of such shorts paved the way for its destiny as the twentieth century's predominant form of entertainment.

This article, while being far from comprehensive due to the limitations of space, is intended to give you a brief insight into some of the more significant or famous appearances of frigates on celluloid - and how exactly they got there, given that the ages of sail and cinema didn't exactly overlap to any great degree.

*"EXT: A British Frigate pushes across the rolling sea"*. What may seem like a simple enough line to write in a script is definitely not so simple to realise on the silver screen. As the Friends of the *HMS Trincomalee*, we are probably more aware than any group of people as to the difficulty of accurately depicting the minutiae of detail, the almost balletic day-to-day workings and elegant grandeur of a historic tall ship. They are, after all, quite rare!

To get around this fundamental problem, filmmakers have resorted to means that range from the ingenious to the simple, the expensive to the cheap. At one end of the scale, for example, is the cost-effective use of miniature models (and more recently computer-generated effects), while at the other, though restricted to productions with somewhat bigger budgets, filmmakers have even gone as far as building precise full-scale replicas (sometimes complete with hidden engines to allow complete control over the handling of the vessel).

A third and more common trick involves the conversion of an existing tall ship to lend it a superficial resemblance to the one needed for the story. It's a technique the layperson rarely spots, though it does occasionally run the risk of misleading the audience into how a real frigate actually appears - you wouldn't believe how many people think the *HMS Bounty* was a frigate simply because... well, she looked like one (she was actually a converted cargo ship, the *Bethia*).

*The Bounty* is, in fact, a good case in point with regards to the difficulty of maintaining historical accuracy in seafaring movies. In the 1935 Clark Gable/Charles Laughton version of the film, it may surprise you to learn that the *Bounty* herself was actually a converted schooner (the 1882 *Lily*) – but even more so that the 24-gun frigate *HMS Pandora* sent after the mutineers was also (the 1892 built *Ottillie Fjord*, later renamed *Nanuk*).

The 1962 Marlon Brando and 1984 Mel Gibson retellings, on the other hand, had to use exact custom-built replicas (both of which still exist, the latter even turning up as *HMS Endeavour* in the 1987 TV miniseries **Captain James Cook**). This serves to highlight that, while even by the 1960s production companies were having to custom-build vessels, in the early days of the cinema sourcing existing ships wasn't so much of a problem, with all manner of masted vessels (and even some frigates) still relatively available.

A fine example is the 1926 film **Old Ironsides**, starring the great Wallace Beery and featuring a “blink and you miss him” appearance by Boris Karloff (five years before *Frankenstein* catapulted him to stardom) as “Saracen Guard”. No doubt many of you will recognise the film's title as the nickname of the *USS Constitution*, the only restored frigate older than our own beloved *Trinc* (though ours does manage to stay afloat all year round, dig, dig). A fictionalised tale of the *Constitution* hunting Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean, while the real vessel was (and still is) in existence, even back then her historic stature meant actually using her on the open sea would be too risky. However, keen to help the makers (and doubtless with an eye on Navy recruitment), the US military conjured up the vessel *Llewellyn J. Morse* to play the part of her more notable comrade, while the *Santa Barbara* was given the dubious honour of being dressed as a pirate frigate.

As World War II swept over the globe, the film industries of the planet took to reinforcing their respective war efforts via both blunt propaganda and more subtle forms of messaging. The 1940 Errol Flynn actioner **The Sea Hawk**, for example, used the era of the Spanish Armada as a (albeit crude) metaphor for the London Blitz. However, in the period of reconstruction and reordering that followed the war, the huge British Empire that the Navy of old had been tasked to protect began to unravel, with colonies and protectorates who had taken up arms against the Axis powers beginning to demand freedom from foreign rule as a reward.

Sensitive to potential insurrection in places like the Far East (and the need to keep such problems from the still largely imperialist public gaze), western cinema began to spew out reflections of the Allied victory over Germany and Japan, plus elaborate musicals and romantic comedies – topics that would leave positive imprints in the minds of the general population. Stories of Empire were thus out of favour for a while, and it was 1951 before the silver screen returned to the time when Britannia could reasonably claim to rule the waves with an adaptation of one of C.S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower books, **Beat to Quarters**.

In the clumsily retitled **Captain Horatio Hornblower RN**, starring Gregory Peck and set in 1807, the Captain's frigate *Lydia* engages in a game of deadly subterfuge against Napoleon's Spanish allies as they secretly sponsored a megalomaniac in a bid to destabilise British influence in the Central America region. Starring as the *Lydia* was the Italian brigantine *Marcel B. Surdo*, one of the most overused vessels in film history. Not especially looking like a British frigate of the time (or any other ship she ever played, which notably excluded brigantines!), it has to be said that very few in the audience

---

## *Frigates on Film - continued*

---

probably even noticed as healthy dollops of action, adventure and romance competed for their attention (the romantic interest being the daughter of the Duke of Wellington no less, mistakenly referred to as such a full seven years before Arthur Wellesley was elevated to the title in 1814!)

As an aside, when a series of TV movies based on Forester's books was made in the late 1990s, featuring Hornblower pre-captaincy and starring Ioan Gruffudd, the budget allowed for the creating of a special replica, the *Grand Turk*. Now a regular on the tall ship circuit, this 125 foot, 22-gun vessel that was the first replica of its type to be made using traditional materials and techniques in around 140 years. Taking its name from both its creator, Michael Turk, and its place of construction, Marmaris in Turkey, the *Grand Turk* would not only play the RN frigate *Indefatigable* but, by having its opposite side painted with a red instead of a yellow stripe, the French vessel *Papillon* too.

Returning to the silver screen and going back in time somewhat, 1958 saw the release of **John Paul Jones**, a biopic of the legendary sea captain of the American War of Independence who is widely credited with being the father of the modern US Navy (even though he was actually born in Scotland). Starring Robert Stack and depicting a variety of events and battles from Jones' life, the vessels under his command were equally as varied, being everything from sloops (the *Providence* and *Ranger*) to armed merchantmen (the *Bonhomme Richard*) to frigates (the *Alliance*). Luckily, Hollywood had the *Marcel B. Surdo* on standby yet again, and in some instances crews in different costumes actually fight each other on screen from the same deck due to clever editing and a judicious use of wide miniature shots!

However, almost half a century would pass before the frigate would take centre stage on the screen once more (TV's **Hornblower** notwithstanding). From the early 1960s onwards, excepting the occasional epic period drama like **Zulu** and **The Wind the Lion**, it was the likes of the James Bond and Carry On films that audiences flocked to see (though, as noted earlier, **Carry On Jack** was set aboard a frigate, while the RN's contemporary vessels made frequent appearances aiding Britain's number one spy with a licence to kill. For completists, the Type 12 Rothesay-class frigate *HMS Rothesay* was in 1964's **Thunderball** and the Type 12 Whitby-class *HMS Tenby* in 1965's **You Only Live Twice** – the three Type 23 frigates in the more recent **Tomorrow Never Dies**, *Chester*, *Devonshire* and *Bedford*, were all fictitious, and actually played by the real vessels *Somerset*, *Westminster* and, for interior shots, the land-based high-tech digital simulator *HMS Dryad*).

And speaking of high-tech digital simulations, this brings us back to **Master and Commander: the Far Side of the World**. Directed by Australian Peter Weir, **Master and Commander** was tipped for a ton of Oscars until it found itself up against New Zealander Peter Jackson's third **Lord of the Rings** film, **The Return of the King**, and in the process of thrashing Weir's movie no doubt avenging centuries of inter-antipodean sheep jokes. This aside, **Master and Commander**, actually spliced together from several of the original books, is probably as close a vision of life aboard a British frigate at sea as we are likely to see.

Making full use of digital effects to put the main vessel, the *HMS Surprise*, through the graphic rigours of weather and combat, the film follows Captain Jack Aubrey as he seeks revenge on the French warship *Acheron* for a devastating sneak attack at the beginning of the movie (the latter vessel being named for the river leading to Hades in Greek mythology). Set and indeed filmed almost exclusively at sea (though a brief section taking place on the Galapagos includes some loving shots of Pinnacle Rock, a formation actually created by practicing US Navy gunners in WW2!), the film was challenging for cast and crew – though the first obstacle to overcome wasn't actually physical, but political.

In the original O'Brien story, the *Surprise* engaged not a French vessel of a new and superior design, but an American one, the 44-gun *USS Norfolk*. Post-September 11th, such a slur on the "Coalition of the Willing" was obviously out of turn, but luckily the US was going through a vicious anti-French period over their lack of support for the policy towards Iraq, and so, with US money making the film, they made the perfect substitute. The plot point of the enemy's revolutionary hull design, actually unique to American vessels at the time, is yet another blip in a film that isn't always as accurate as it would like to be (the makers really should have come to the *Trinc* now, shouldn't they!)

For the production, the *Acheron* was only partially constructed at 1:1 scale on a large barge for close-ups, with full views of the vessel being represented by detailed models and computer effects. The full sized *Surprise*, on the other hand, was a complete and accurate replica of a Royal Navy frigate, the *Rose*. Although sometimes referred to as *HMS Rose*, she was actually built in America in 1970 from the plans of the real 1757 original as a counterpoint to the *USS Constitution* for the 1976 Bicentennial, and is therefore ineligible for the prefix. Incidentally, **Master and Commander** wasn't the first appearance by the *Rose* on film – ironically for a type of vessel that would be so instrumental in their destruction, her interiors played the notorious slave ship *Tecora* in Steven Spielberg's 1997 **Amistad**. A vessel with a history of financial trouble, the *Rose* currently retains the livery of the *Surprise* while berthed in the US waiting to see what the future will bring.

There can be no doubt that **Master and Commander**, for all its faults, was an entertaining film that certainly raised the profile of frigates and generated interest in period naval warfare – and for ships like the *HMS Trincomalee*, that can only be a good thing.

I hope you've enjoyed this brief voyage through the murky waters of movie frigates, though I've save the murkiest for last – and a film you're never likely to see as it was banned by the US government in the 1960s (though copies can be found on the web if you know where to look). 1943's **Hemp for Victory** was a bizarre propaganda film on the history of this most flexible flora, and concentrated on its heroic past use as the rigging of the vessels that catapulted the likes of the aforementioned John Paul Jones to glory. So why was it banned then? Well, in the 1960s this particular substance found, shall we say, an entirely different reason to be popular, and the movie only went and showed everyone the best conditions for growing it! Talk about an article going out on a high!

### **Gary Kester, Friend of HMS Trincomalee**

*Gary is known for his work in Hartlepool in the fields of design and media, and is also a long-standing writer on the subjects of film, music and digital media, having been published in 23 countries*

HARTLEPOOL

# Historic Quay & Museum

*Travel back in time to the sights, sounds and smells of an 18th century seaport.*

**PLUS**

*Visit HMS Trincomalee berthed afloat within Hartlepool Historic Quay.*

*(Separate Entrance Fee applies)*






**FREE ENTRY**

## Museum

*of Hartlepool*



**Entrance fee applies to Historic Quay Museum & Gift Shop FREE entry**

*The Museum of Hartlepool is a FREE fantastic visitor attraction telling the story of Hartlepool from prehistoric times to the present day.*

**Living Museum of the Year**

Large Visitor Attraction 2002/2003

**NORTHUMBRIA**

TOURIST BOARD

**Hartlepool Historic Quay & Museum, Jackson Dock, Maritime Avenue, Hartlepool TS24 0XZ Tel: 01429 860077**

Open 7 days a week all year round except Christmas Day, Boxing Day & New Years Day.

***www.destinationhartlepool.com***

Voted the: "Most popular new attraction in England" by the English Tourism Council and winner of the BT North East Award for the 'Favourite Children's Visit'.






## HMS TRINCOMALEE TRUST

The HMS Trincomalee Trust is the Charitable Company that maintains and conserves the Ship. We operate the day to day public use of the Ship for general visits, functions, meetings and weddings, and also run the ShipShop.

***All profits from the ShipShop help us to maintain HMS Trincomalee.***

***There is an expanding range of souvenirs to choose from and you can order through our website: [www.hms-trincomalee.co.uk](http://www.hms-trincomalee.co.uk)***

***There are discounts for the Friends of the Ship.***

Please contact the Trust for details:  
HMS Trincomalee Trust, Jackson Dock, Hartlepool TS24 0SQ.  
Telephone: 01429 223193 • Fax: 01429 864385  
Email: [office@hms-trincomalee.co.uk](mailto:office@hms-trincomalee.co.uk)