

# Quartermasterdeck

FRIENDS OF HMS TRINCOMALEE

£1.00

SPRING 2009

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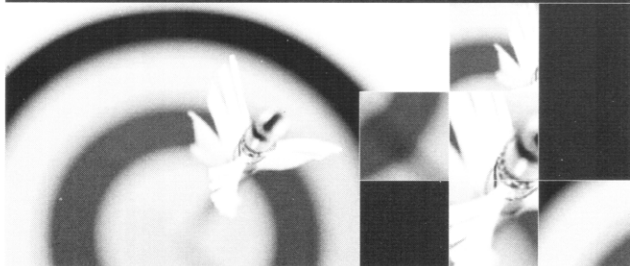
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**Horwath Clark Whitehill**

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# *A Shanty for HMS Trincomalee?*

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I now know the verse scored by Robert Burns on a window in the Carron Inn – see members' letters -. Fortunately this is publishable, especially since this year marks the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his birth on 25th January 1759.

In this edition there is an article looking at the different types of sea shanties, which has made me wonder whether or not we Friends could write a shanty for our Ship. We already know that Gordon Smith of Rotherham can pen a verse or two. Perhaps it could be included in our Christmas get together this year. Surely such a shanty would be of the ceremonial type, reflecting the past, present and future of the Ship and finish on an upbeat note. Any offers?

The item on HMS Trincomalee at St Helena reminds us that the Ship is very much of the Napoleonic era as shown in a contemporary magazine article.

When drawing up the glossary of terms associated with firing a cannon I seem to have come a cropper with the word 'crupper', can anyone help? This explains why the word is not included in this issue's crossword. Once again many of the answers in the crossword relate to the Ship and articles in this edition of Quarterdeck. The solution of the Autumn crossword is to be found in the members' letters pages and in time honoured manner – The editor's decision is final.

Finally as editor I have decided my motto will be:

*'Se non è vero, è ben trovato'.*

(If it is not true, it is cleverly invented.)

**Hugh Turner** (*Editor*)

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**The Secretary, Ruth Turner**

*Correspondence and contributions for the magazine to:*

**The Editor, Hugh Turner**

*Both at:*

**Chevin House, 30 Kingfisher Close, Bishop Cuthbert, Hartlepool TS26 0GA**

**E-Mail: TrincomaleeFriends@tiscali.co.uk**

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**Membership Secretary, Keith Rogers**

**Tanglewood, Manor Garth Drive, Hartlepool TS26 0LT**

**Tel: 01429 266126**

## *HMS Trincomalee at St. Helena*

Many readers of this article will already be acquainted with the diary of Eliza Bunt, the widow of an officer of the Trincomalee dockyard. She kept the diary whilst on her voyage back to England from Ceylon on board HMS Trincomalee, having joined the ship on 27th October 1818, Captain Philip Henry Bridges at that time being entrusted with bringing the newly built ship to England from India.

From 15th December 1818 to 1st February 1819 her diary entries stop for over six weeks, except for a few notes, with no mention of St Helena where HMS Trincomalee arrived on 24th January 1819 and departed six days later on 30th January. The ship had a cargo of bullocks and other supplies taken on board at Table Bay, Cape Horn, to deliver to the squadron based at St Helena with the duty of preventing Napoleon escaping. Interestingly it was only 4 miles from the port of James Town at St Helena that Napoleon was held captive at Longwood House since his arrival at the Island on 17th October 1815 until his death in 1821.

Is it possible that HMS Trincomalee was docked at St Helena for six days without some further involvement in Napoleon's plight?

Apparently not! The following entry in the 'Monthly Magazine' of 1819 adds a little more colour to those six days and I quote it in its original words and spellings:

*'The Portsmouth Telegraph, of the 3d inst. contained the following letter dated St Helena, Jan. 29, 1819.*

*There has been no occurrence here of any interest to our friends at home, for some time; all has been as vapid and monotonous as the harbour duty on a home station, only, with far greater privations. But, at length, a buzz has been created – Mr. Stokoe, the surgeon of the Flag-ship, whom Bonaparte accepted as his medical attendant, after the return home of Mr O'Meara has incurred the displeasure of the governor, and he returns to England in the Trincomalee.*

*The facts are, I understand – When Mr. Stokoe consented to succeed Mr. O'Meara, and before he had made any visit to Bonaparte, he made it the 'sine qua non' of his accepting the situation, with Sir Hudson Lowe, that he should not be required to detail any familiar conversations into which he may be drawn, or any circumstances which he might overhear, at Longwood; but pledging himself, as a British officer, that, if any thing should come to his knowledge in which his allegiance to his king and country would be compromised by his secrecy, he would then instantly give information to the governor. This was passed on until a few days since, when Bonaparte was suddenly seized with serious illness, in the middle of the night. Mr. Stokoe, as soon as the necessary forms were gone through, visited him, and found that he had had a slight apoplectic fit. After a few hours he appeared free from the attack, but it had left a considerable degree of indisposition.*

*Mr Stokoe made official reports of the circumstances to Sir Hudson Lowe and the Admiral*



*(Plampin), and gave copies of them to Bonaparte. Whether it was this latter circumstance, or whether Mr. Stokoe had represented Bonaparte as being in a worse state of health than suited the predisposed notions of Sir Hudson, is not known; but he was instantly forbid to go to Longwood – was threatened to be tried by a court-martial, – or as an act of mitigation of his offence, he was told he might invalid home.*

*Of course, he preferred the latter, as the least incommodious to him, and he sails tomorrow in the Trincomalee. The reports were drawn up, of course, with conscientious accuracy, and were such as the case demanded. – I understand Bonaparte is really in serious state of health. His dwelling is sealed against all visitors.'*

I thank Paul Brunyee of Malton, a Friend of HMS Trincomalee, for the following photograph of modern day James Town, not so different from the description of the port made in 1817 by a surgeon, Walter Henry, visiting at the time:



*'.....the ugliest and most dismal rock conceivable, of rugged and abrupt surface, rising like an enormous black wart from the face of the deep. Not a blade of grass or trace of vegetation could be perceived from our ship, as we sailed round to get to leeward of the island, until we came to our anchorage, when James's Town, the metropolis, and only town, was first descried; sunk in a deep ravine between two steep mountains – with its white church – English looking houses, bristling rocks and batteries, and two or three dozen of trees.'*

HMS Trincomalee arrived at Spithead on 29th March 1819.

# *How to Fire Your Cannon*

With the warning, do not try this at home, and the disclaimer that the editor takes no responsibility for loss of life and limb, the following is based on the second edition, 1829, of 'A Treatise on Naval Gunnery' by Howard Douglas.

Each gun battery was led by a captain of the gun who both gave commands and pointed the gun. The other men were equally divided being placed each side as right hand and left hand men. The first man on the right sponged and rammed down the cartridge, the first man on the left receiving the cartridge from the powder man who fetched it during the action. The last man on the right wore a small apron, with a pocket to hold spare flints and some old linen for cleaning the lock. Two gunner mates in each battery were provided with bags containing a stock and bits, four gimlets, one screw driver, two spare locks, spare line for trigger pulls and more old linen.

The guns were loaded when the ships were out of harbour and the exercise begins according to this supposition.

**Repair to quarters** - The powder men proceeded to the gunners store to fetch the powder horns, tube and cartridge boxes, the last two men on the right fetched the locks and the other men repaired to their respective guns.

**Take out your tampions, cast loose your guns** - The first man on the right took out the tampion, and the captain of the gun oversaw the casting loose of the gun, securing it against the ship's side by hitching to the cascabel both tackle falls which he then gave to the second man right to hold.

**Prime your gun** - The captain of the gun then laid hold of the priming wire with his right hand, pieced the cartridge, took a tube out of the tube box, tore the cap of the tube and introduced it into the vent. He then took the priming horn in his right hand, opened the pan on the lock with his left, filled it with powder, shutting it quickly.

**Point your guns** - The captain of the gun placed himself to the right of the train tackle, his right leg stretched backwards, his left hand upon the base ring of the gun and his right hand on the handle of the pointing wedge or quoin. The third man, assisted by the fourth for heavy guns, took up the hand spike and the iron crows, placing them upon the steps of the carriage to raise or lower the breech, as directed by the captain of the gun, until the gun had a proper degree of elevation.

The same men then placed the hand spikes and crows under the cheeks of the carriage, loosened the tackle falls handing them to the men placed nearest to them to keep the gun hauled tight to the port. The captain of the gun then cocked the lock, took hold of the trigger line in his right hand, and moved back quickly beyond the recoil of the gun. He pointed the gun, stooping and placing his eye in a line with the chase sight and the breech ring. Having pointed the gun the captain gave the

command - 'To your posts' - upon which the men withdrew the hand spikes and crows, and fell in holding them upright so that the trucks would not run over them when the gun recoiled.

**Make ready with the lint stock** - The rear man on the left laid hold of the lower end of the lint stock, placed himself on a line with the hind axle tree, facing the port hole, stooped, in order to blow on the match, then held it within four inches of the base ring of the gun ready to fire the moment the captain of the gun gave the word, if the lock should fail.

**Fire** - the captain watched for a favourable time to fire, when the moment came he made a signal and pulled with a jerk, the trigger line. If the gun did not go off and he thought the direction was still good he would give the command 'fire'. Upon this the man set fire to the tube with the lint stock, withdrawing quickly, and the men who had hold of the tackle falls let them go taking care that they were not in the direction of the trucks.

After firing, every man, except the first right and left, moved quickly to the train tackle, hooked it on the crupper, and hauled upon it if the gun should not have run in sufficiently. The last man on the left fastened the train tackle with a clove hitch and preparations to load the cannon commenced.

#### Glossary:

*Breech ring* - ring on rear of cannon

*Cascabel* - the part behind the base-ring of a cannon

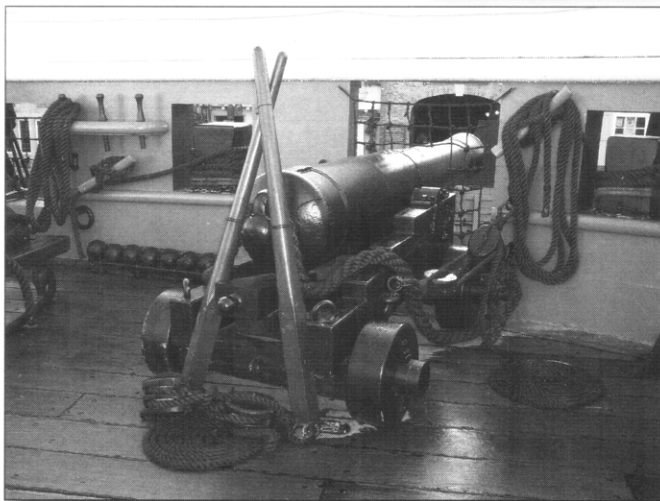
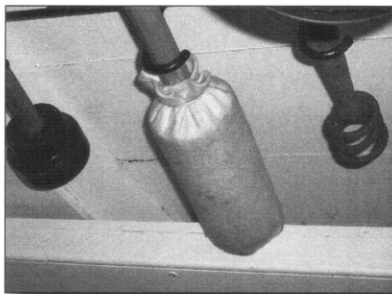
*Crows* - large iron bars

*Gimlets* - hand held tools for boring holes

*Spunge* - 'Sponge', a swab for a cannon

*Tackle falls* - ropes attached to the cannon

*Vent* - touch-hole passage in cannon



# MEMBERS' LETTERS

Since the publication of the last issue of Quarterdeck, I am pleased to say that the verse of poetry scored by Robert Burns on a window of the Carron Inn has been provided to me by both Eronwy Rees of Neath, and Dudley Moore of Bramber, the latter providing further information in his letter to me. Bill Vandersteen of Winchester has pointed out the more accepted derivation of the word 'grog', and that the Carron Company made a variety of products (To which I will add the iron tiles for the roof of the Houses of Parliament and castings for Volvo cars). Thank you for your letters.

*Editor*

## From Dudley Moore 18th October 2008

This is the poem Burns 'penned' onto the window of the Carron Inn (he used a diamond-tipped stylus which had been given to him in Edinburgh by James Cunningham, 14th Earl of Glencairn):

*We cam na here to view your works  
In hopes to be mair wise,  
But only, lest we gang to hell,  
It may be nae surprise;  
But when we tirl'd at your door,  
Your porter dought na hear us;  
Sae may, should we to Hell's yetts come,  
Your billy Satan sair us.*

These lines were seen by William Benson, a clerk at Carron Works (from 1765). He penned a reply:

*If you came here to view our works  
You should have been more civil  
Than to give a fictitious name,  
In hope to cheat the devil,  
Six days a week to you and all,  
We think it very well;  
The other if you go to church,  
May keep you out of hell.*

Keep up the good work on Trincomalee (I trained on her in 1965)

Yours sincerely,

Dudley Moore  
Bramber, West Sussex

## From Bill Vandersteen 13th October 2008

The autumn edition of Quarterdeck arrived with this morning post and has been read with great interest.

I would like to make a couple of comments with regard to the article 'GROG - A Healthy Beverage'. It was Admiral Vernon in 1740, who, concerned with drunkenness in the Navy on the West Indies Station, first ordered that the rum ration should be watered down. Admiral Vernon was known throughout the Royal Navy as 'Old Grog', because of his custom of wearing a boat cloak made from a material called Grogam. So watered down rum was called grog which was later adopted by the admiralty to try and alleviate drunkenness in the Navy' Nelson's body was preserved in brandy not rum, which had to be topped up from time to time due to evaporation.

In the article about the Carron Company, the Company also made Pillar Boxes for the GPO.

All the best.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Vandersteen,  
Winchester

## Mess Deck Crossword

Autumn 2008

Solution:



# SEA SHANTIES

Recent visitors to the Historic Quay in Hartlepool, where HMS Trincomalee is docked, will most likely have been greeted by the sound of sea shanties emanating from speakers attached to a quayside building. Historically though, shanties were not usually sung ashore, and were working songs. As the sailors toiled at repetitive tasks, the rhythm of the song served to synchronise the movements of the sailors. Shanties were not allowed on ships of the Royal Navy, as it was believed that they would adversely affect the crew's discipline, however merchant ships had many shanties in use.

The word 'shanty' is derived from the French word 'chanter', 'to sing', and from at least the fifteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century shanties flourished. Most surviving shanties date from the nineteenth century and, less commonly, the eighteenth century. As sail gave way to steam the practical use of shanties went into abeyance.

Shanties may be divided into rough categories, reflecting the jobs they were sung to which would determine the rhythm of the music. Six such categories follow. Most shanties are 'call and response' songs, with the 'shantyman' singing the line and a chorus of sailors bellowing the response.

**Long-haul (also called 'halyard' or 'long-drag') Shanties** - These were sung to accompany hauling on a line which was expected to last a long time, e.g. raising and lowering sails. With the canvas and wood, sails could weigh between 1,000 and 2,500 pounds. In order to set a sail a crew member would climb the rigging to loosen the canvas, and on deck the crew would take hold of a line called the halyard (for haul + yard). There are usually two pulls per chorus as in 'WAY, hey, BLOW the man down!'.

**Short-haul (also called 'sheet' or 'short-drag') Shanties** - When the job of hauling on a line was expected to be quick but require great force, for example trimming the sails or raising the masthead, a short-haul shanty was sung. These have one strong pull in each chorus as in 'Way, haul away, haul away JOE!'

**Capstan Shanties** - These are anchor raising shanties to be sung as sailors turned the giant winch, winding the rope around it attached to the anchor. Since no pulling was required they are usually more 'smooth' sounding than the other shanties and usually told stories because of the length of time (which could be hours) it took to raise the anchor. They often have a full chorus in addition to the call-and-response verses, e.g. 'John Brown's Body' adapted from the army marching song, and 'Rio Grande'.

**Stamp-'n'-Go Shanties** - On ships with large crews many sailors would take hold of a line with their backs to the fall (where the line reaches the deck from aloft) and march away along the deck singing and stamping out the rhythms. These shanties

tend to have longer choruses similar to Capstan Shanties, a well known example being 'What shall we do with the Drunken Sailor?'

**Pumping Shanties** - All wooden ships leak, and in ships this leaked-in water (the bilge) would collect in the bilge hold. Frequently the bilge water had to be pumped out with a two-man pump before steam power took over from sail. An example is 'Barnacle Bill the Sailor'. Particularly after the adoption of the Downton pump, which used a capstan rather than pump handles moved up and down, many Capstan Shanties were used as Pumping Shanties and vice versa.

**Fo'c's'le (Forecastle) Songs , Forebitters and Ceremonial Shanties** - These were sung for pleasure in the fo'c's'le where the sailors slept or, in fine weather, where they gathered near to the forebitters (large posts on the foredeck). They usually told stories of famous battles, romance or of their longing for home, quite often they were just plain funny songs. Ceremonial shanties were kept for times of celebration, for example when they crossed the equator.

The above categories are not absolute, sailors might take a song from one category, and, with necessary alterations to the rhythm, use it for a different task. However one rule was generally observed, in that songs that spoke of returning home were only sung on the homeward leg, and songs that sung of the joys of voyaging were only sung on the outward leg.

In the twenty first century sea shanties are mainly performed as popular music, sometimes by large choral groups, particularly in Poland and the Netherlands, or in smaller groups as folk music. However they have made their way into the classical repertoire – for example, the main theme from the first movement of Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 2 in F major mimics the shanty 'What shall we do with the Drunken sailor?' Also most years a medley of sea shanties is performed in front of Royalty in London at the Royal Albert Hall, Sir Henry Wood's Fantasia on British Sea Songs being a regular feature of the Last Night of the Proms.

### **One version of the Drunken Sailor:**

What shall we do with a drunken sailor?  
What shall we do with a drunken sailor?  
What shall we do with a drunken sailor?  
Early in the morning?

*Way-hay, up she rises*

*Way-hay, up she rises*

*Way-hay, up she rises*

*Early in the morning.*

Put him in the long boat 'til he's sober  
Pull out the bung and wet him all over  
Put him in the scuppers with the deck pump on him  
Heave him by the leg in a runnin' bowlin'  
Tie him to the taffrail when she's yard-arm under



## **That was the year that was .....**

When the custodians of our fine Ship reflect in times to come, 2008 may be seen as one of those key years in the on-going story of HMS Trincomalee. The recently completed exhibition brings it home that the Ship has had some remarkable 'escapes' over the years. If it had not been for good fortune or someone coming out of the woodwork – so to speak – then she could have been lost on several occasions!

2008 was not as dramatic as that, but nevertheless a number of important steps were achieved to consolidate the future conservation of the vessel and the way in which she is interpreted for the public benefit. The opening of the exhibition is part of that process, as have been the excellent additions to the interpretation on board – if you have not visited recently then you are in for a treat! Equally, the completed replacement of the lower rigging, which was done entirely 'in-house', has been a significant achievement in its own right as well as securing a most difficult area of maritime conservation.

Perhaps the most notable event, however, was the agreement reached with the Jomast Group for the Company to develop the Trincomalee Wharf site. This agreement provides investment funding over a period of time for the Trust to help offset our current operational deficit, as well of course for the developer to regenerate the last remaining quayside area of the Marina with some fine buildings to increase footfall and activity. It's a great prospect, but ....

## **What of 2009 and beyond?**

No one needs reminding that we are all facing a challenging time now because of the downturn in the economy, the result of which is putting the leisure pound under some unwelcome pressure. There is a certain painful irony that when the Trust receives funds to invest for the first time in years, the interest rates plummet to their lowest on record! The result is that we must do even more to generate public awareness of the Ship and to increase all our income streams in the times ahead, and everyone can play a positive part.

During last autumn a Fundraising Team was formed to bring together ideas and delivery of plans to counter the 'credit crunch' and take the Trust forward towards and beyond the Tall Ships Races that will be hosted in Hartlepool in August 2010. The build-up and the event itself is a great opportunity to raise the profile of the town and the Ship.

Rather than just sitting on our hands, the Team, which has representatives of the Friends actively involved, is now ready to launch the Project Appeal 2009-2011. Friends will have a copy of the main leaflet enclosed with this Quarterdeck magazine. The leaflet was generously funded in its entirety by the Friends. The

Project Elements highlight in a broad way the range of exciting developments that are ready to be activated once we can get the funds coming in. There are a host of smaller, but equally important things to be done within the Appeal – at little cost – such as maintaining regular features about the Ship in the media and reviewing ways of improving our trading performance.

If you feel able, we would be most grateful to receive a donation to help kick-start the Appeal, which would be given in the knowledge that all contributions are helping towards this important programme of improvements. Thank you very much indeed.

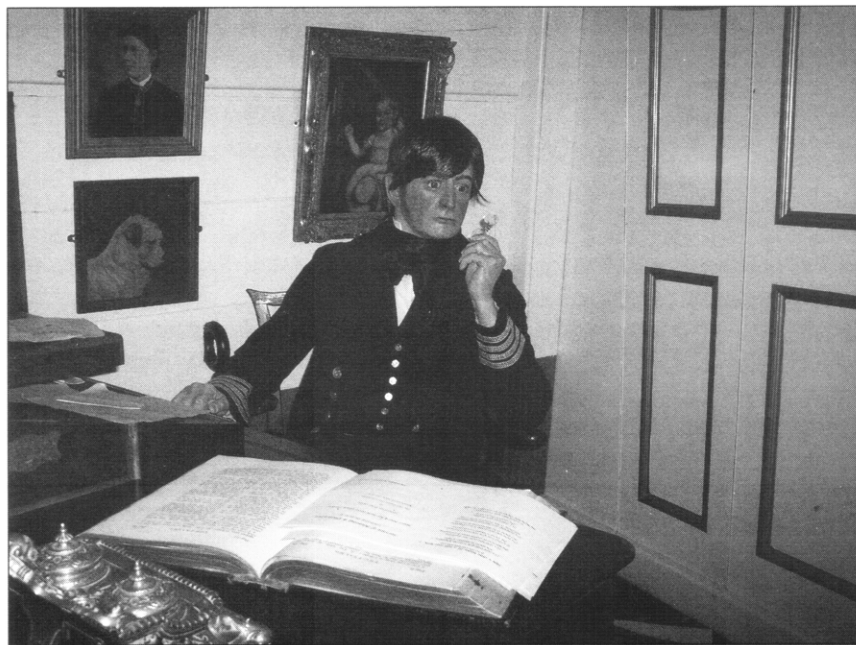
## **A Miscellany**

It pleasing to report the great success of the Christmas Lunches that were held in the Captain's Cabin on most days during December. If you wish to book for Christmas 2009 do give a call to the caterers on 01429 891556: I know that they have taken some bookings already!

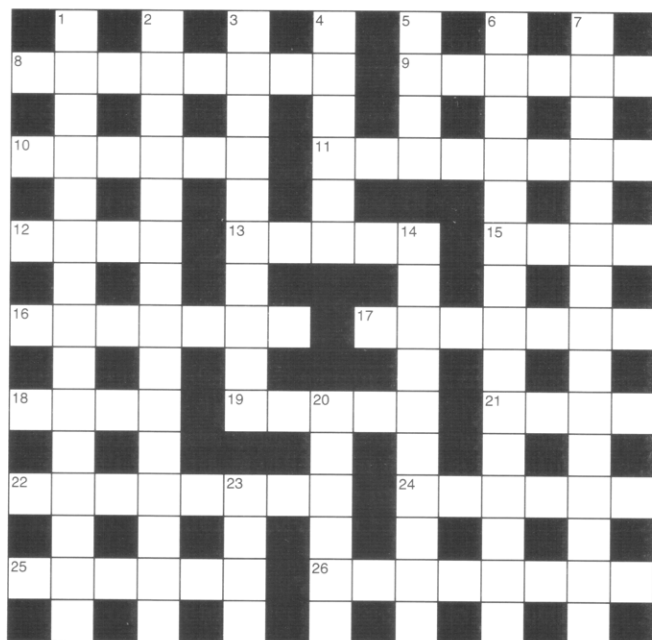
Finally, a group of youngsters from Manor College in the town had the opportunity to script and produce a short film about HMS Trincomalee under the supervision of Paul Frost, the television presenter/producer. They did really well and we shall hope to place their effort on the website in due course. A useful aside is that Paul is now producing a full DVD for us through his professional company depicting the story of HMS Trincomalee. It should be available before Easter. More details later.

### **Bryn Hughes**

*General Manager, HMS Trincomalee Trust*



# Mess Deck Crossword



HDT

## ACROSS

- 8 Sailors' work songs
- 9 South American animals of the camel family
- 10 Very warm climate
- 11 Lawfulness
- 12 Small fish of the salmon kind
- 13 'To your ----' a command to fall in
- 15 HMS Trincomalee was named at a Silver ---- Ceremony
- 16 Quest
- 17 Ship restored at Hartlepool
- 18 Large land mass where Trincomalee is
- 19 First name of Mrs Bunt
- 21 Locate
- 22 Push forward unduly
- 24 Made a point
- 25 Surgeon who attended Bonaparte
- 26 State of happiness

## DOWN

- 1 Sung when a quick and large pull is required (5-4,6)
- 2 Type of poor behaviour on pitch
- 3 The cat-o'-nine-tails helped maintain this
- 4 Sacred songs
- 5 Pennon
- 6 Common type of shanty (4,3,8)
- 7 Leader of a gun battery (7,2,3,3)
- 14 The art of handling ships
- 20 Not in the black (2,4)
- 23 Follow

*Solution next issue*

# APPLICATION FORM

## to join

### THE FRIENDS OF HMS TRINCOMALEE

Membership categories and annual subscriptions:

|                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Adult                 | £20.00 |
| Concessionary *       | £15.00 |
| Joint Adult           | £30.00 |
| Joint Concessionary * | £22.50 |
| Family Group +        | £45.00 |

\* Children, students and those unwaged

+ Two adults and up to three children in a family

*Please complete, detach and return this form to:*

The Friends of HMS Trincomalee  
PO Box 1817, Hartlepool, TS24 7YE

**MEMBERSHIP CARDS ARE NOT TRANSFERABLE**

#### ***YOUR DETAILS:***

Title ..... Surname .....

First Names .....

Address .....

.....

..... Post Code .....

Tel. ....

Membership Category .....

*Cheques made payable to 'HMS Trincomalee Trust'*

AMOUNT .....

☐

GIFT AID DECLARATION. As a UK taxpayer I would like the HMS Trincomalee Trust to claim back the tax on this and all future donations.

*Please tick the box.*

SIGNATURE .....

# THE FRIENDS OF HMS TRINCOMALEE

## *Spring Events 2009*

*28 January*

*'Odd Man Out in the Alps'  
with Sir Ron Norman*

*25 February*

*'St. Petersburg'  
by Edward Bunting*

*25 March*

*Annual General Meeting  
Guest Speaker  
Captain Professor Iain Moffatt*

*29 April*

*Talk by the local RNLI*

*All events take place in the Captain's Quarters on board  
HMS Trincomalee and begin at 7.00pm*

These events are free for Friends, with guests charged £1 each.

Friends receive free entry to HMS Trincomalee and Hartlepool's Maritime Experience for one year, can attend talks and presentations on board, receive the Quarterdeck magazine which is published three times a year and receive a 10% discount on items from the Ship Shop.

An application form is overleaf.