

This is a continuation of a Deck Cadet's 1st Trip Journal from 1974.

Part 1 of the Journal (from 24th October to 28th November 1974) can be found [here](#)
[Opens in a separate window: filesize < 1Mb]

November 28th 74 – Portsmouth.

08:05 Quality Control of Avcat yielded the same results as yesterday. After this, two cadets applied a top coat of paint in the Quality Control Room.

13:05 The 36' workboat was lowered as we had to go to the Brown Ranger to get some stores. The boat broke down, and it wasn't until 14:30 that we finally got underway.

The Brown Ranger, now 33 yrs.old, was de-storing and we removed 240 fathoms of rope, some books and also small equipment. The Chief Officer of the ship showed us around and I was amazed to learn that 4 weeks ago, she was in New Zealand.

At 16:30 we restored the ropes and equipment aboard Olwen and then secured for the day.

November 29th 74 – Portsmouth.

DATE	GREEN BOOK	DATE	GREEN BOOK
28/11/74	08:05 Quality Control of Avcat yielded the same results as yesterday. After this, two cadets applied a top coat of paint in the Quality Control Room.	29/11/74	08:05 This morning, three samples were taken of each tank of Avcat. Tank three still shows a great deal of water. On completing the daily task we had to take a sample of the lub.oil coming aboard as well as regular soundings. The soundings, taken from the cap on the generator flat, showed that the oil was coming up one foot six inches per hour and we shut down at 12:32 with an ullage of 3' 11 3/4".

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down at 12:32 with an ullage of 3' 11 3/4".

At 15:15 we went out in the 25ft. cutter in which we practiced approaching and picking up a floating object.

16:20 Short lecture on pyrotechnics and line throwing apparatus which is kept in strategic places such as monkey island.

November 30th 74 – Portsmouth.

08:05 Daily routine, Quality Control of Avcat, yielding the same results as yesterday. At 10:30 we lowered the 25ft. cutter as it was required to take a trip to OLMEDA. She left for OLMEDA after a few mechanical problems at 10:46, This was followed by rule of the road, morse code and signals after which we were allowed to go ashore.

December 1st – 74 (Sunday)

09:05 Quality Control of Avcat followed by check through record books and collection of correspondence course. After this we were free and I started work on the second lesson of our correspondance course.

December 2nd 74 – Portsmouth.

08:05 Quality Control of Avcat, during which my comrade somehow got the sampling pot hitched and it was eventually lost.

09:10 Took the freeboard and draft, after which I worked on the lifeboats, freeing all the gripes, oiling the threads and finally tightening them up.

12:30 Harbour Stations. We secured the tug on the port beam. and stood by until it was let go. The pilot ladder was then rigged as the pilot had to get onto the boat, once OLWEN was clear of the harbour.

14:15 Proceeded to study and worked on correspondance course.

18:30 – 19:30 Tutorial of Rule of Road and Signal flags.

December 3rd 74 - 12:00 - 75 miles SW Mizzen Hd. Ireland.

08:05 Quality Control of Avcat after which all cadets were individually called up for the Captains Monthly inspection of record books.

10:35 Cadets of port watch continued working on the lifeboats, restoring them with food and equipment.

In the lifeboats, there is sufficient food for sixty five people to have one pound of barley sugar and one pound of biscuits each, both of which are of extremely high concentration of vitamins and protiens.

At 17:00 boats 3 – 6 were all completed and secured for the day.

A tutorial was given to the starboard watch, while Port Watch practised Morse with the Signalman.

December 4th 74 - 12:00 - 30 miles NW. Ireland.

08:05 Quality Control of Avcat was cancelled due to poor weather conditions and I went to work on deck chipping paint and preparing steelwork for a coat of Red Admar. This routine continued to go on until 11:30 when the cadets went onto the bridge for an explanation on how to use a plotting table because tomorrow we will be doing watches during the submarine exercise.

At 13:00 cadets of the Port Watch continued working on deck, finishing chipping and applying the coat of primer.

18:30 Tutorial, RoR and Signals.

December 5th 74 - 54 40'N 10 40'W

After a rough night's rest, I was called at 03:40 and I was on the Bridge at 04:00 to do a four hour "plotting watch". Due to poor weather and high swells, the ship was running behind schedule and the exercise did not begin at 06:00 as planned. During the watch, the navigator showed me how to determine positions using the Decca, and at 30min. intervals the position was marked on the chart.

At 08:00 I was relieved and went to study until 03:50 when I went back onto the bridge. An exercise was in progress so I continued with plotting of our movements at 20min. intervals. Also I used the Decca again and marked our position off onto the chart. At 20:00 I was relieved from duties.

December 6th 74 - enroute ROSYTH

08:05 During the morning, I managed to complete a reasonable amount of Lesson Two Physics as well as a little on the project.

13:08 Cadets in Port Watch worked in the Centre Castle, coiling up the new mooring ropes and tidying up in general. On completion, we lashed up all loose objects as the ship was still sailing into a reasonably high swell.

18:30 Evening lecture on the hand lead line and the various types of markings contained on it. (ie 10ft is piece of leather + hole)

Also a check on Record Books and information on our FIRST SHIP.

[AUTHOR'S NOTE 2013: next page copied from MNTB Deck Cadet Record Book . Use PDF magnifier or similar for a clearer image]

PARTICULARS OF SHIPS

It is an essential feature of your cadet training that you obtain a thorough knowledge of the ships in which you serve. To assist you in meeting this important requirement the following particulars are to be recorded during the time spent in each ship. QUESTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO YOUR LAST SHIP ARE LIKELY TO BE PUT TO YOU DURING SEAMANSHIP ORALS FOR THE ONC/OND OR 2ND MATE'S CERTIFICATE.

New tonnage is generally now built to Metric Units and provision for you to insert either S.I. (Systeme International) or Imperial Units as appropriate.

First Ship

s.s./m.v. RFA OLWEN.		Call Sign G Q K A.	
	S.I.	IMPERIAL	
Length O.A.	m	64.8 ft.	Lifeboats (No.) 6
Breadth	m	8.4 ft.	Life-rafts (No.) 6
Depth	m	4.5 ft.	Lifeboat dimensions 2 hydrostatic release.
Summer Draft	m	36' 5 1/8 ft.	Capacity per boat 60/65
Summer Freeboard	mm	7 ft. 5 1/2 ins.	Capacity per Life-raft 20/4
Net tonnage	m ³	9391.96 tons	Davits WELIN
Gross tonnage	m ³	18603.66 tons	(Type) MACLACHLAN
Deadweight	tonnes	25,134 tons	Size of Falls (diam.)
Light Displacement	tonnes	10,893 tons	Lifebuoys (No.) 8
Fresh Water Allowance	mm	9 1/4 ins.	
Immersion at Load Draft	T.P.C.	962 T.P.I.	GRAVITY
Trimming Moment	M.C.T.C.	M.C.T. 1"	EIGHT.
Bale capacity	m ³	cu. ft.	Fire Extinguishers
Grain capacity	m ³	cu. ft.	Types: 22 Soda/Acid
Liquid capacity	m ³	7945.18 cu. ft.	21 Foam
Refrigerated capacity	m ³	2500 cu. ft.	2 Dry Powder
			34 C/O 6/0
			Fire Hoses (No. and size) 6/0
			Lengths 60 x 40 x 20.
			Size: 3" - 2" - 1"
			Breathing Appar. (make) 6 SIEBE GORMAN BELLOWS
			TOUGH MIX, NYLON, MANILA.
			Mooring Ropes
			Natural Fibre 7 PLATED
			Synthetic Fibre 120' x 6
			Wires
			Towing Spring QUANTITY TWO
Engines (Type)	LESLIE HARTNORN. PAMATRA D A STEAM TURBINE.		Derricks/Cranes
Boilers (Type and No.)	2 BABCOCK & WILCOX		No. and S.W.L. 1 10 TON CRANE.
Bunker Capacity	tonnes	3236 tons	7 2 TON DERRICKS.
Daily Consumption	tonnes	130 tons	2 3 TON DERRICKS.
Service Speed	knots	19.5 knots	(Type) 11 CLARKE-CHAPMAN
Main Engine output	kW	26500 BHP	Cargo Pumps
at 100 revs per min.			(No.) 6
Type of steering gear	ELECTRIC/HYDRAULIC.		Types-rating
			2 TURBINE RECIPROCATING
			2 STEAM RECIPROCATING
Anchors (weight)	tonnes	300 cwt.	
Port		133	Log (Type) THE WALKER NEPTUNE
Starboard		133	Radar(s) (Type) KELVIN-HUGHES.
Spare		128	Magnetic Compass (Type) ADMIRALTY
Stream		330 fathoms	Gyro (Type) ADMIRALTY
Cable (size)	330 fath. mm	2 1/4 ins.	V.H.F./R.T. (Type) PYE/MARCONI.
			Echo Sounder (Type) MARCONI SEAGRAPH.
			ALSO 193

December 7th 74 - 12 noon. Outer Hebrides.

08:15 Reported to the carpenter to do soundings of the cofferdams and also the freshwater tanks. "Chippy" explained the location of the 'plugs' and the purpose of the spaces and reasons for daily soundings.

At 10:30 the cadets reported to the boatswains mate who was doing an eyesplice in toughmix rope. The splice was completed after taking four tucks and then we whipped the ends using an American Overhand Whip.

11:40 Rule of Road, Signals, Compass Test.

13:00 Tutorial and Personal Study: worked on correspondence course all afternoon.

18:30 Morse code practice with the signalman.
Secured for day at 19:15.

The evening was left free, but I continued on the correspondence course.

December 8th 74 - Firth of Forth.

Daily soundings of cofferdams etc. with the 'chippy's mate', after which harbour stations were called. We made the approach and finally dropped the port anchor and set out 6 shackles. Due to windy weather, the ship layed well back, and the cable was leading ahead. We were all stood down at 11:45 for Sunday Dinner.

14:00 Study and work on correspondence course during the afternoon and now I only have to finish my project.

December 9th 74 - Rosyth.

08:00 Soundings with the chippy's mate on the Tank Deck.

08:30 Anchor party close up. Anchor sighted and clear at approx.09:20. we headed into ROSYTH from the anchorage and we came alongside at approx.11:0, after taking a pilot aboard. We set out two headlines and two springs. Stood down at 11:45

13:00 cargo watch and a quick check along the tank deck as the pumpman gave a brief explanation of the system. After a look around the pumproom, we reported to the Bosun and did a little chipping. At 16:30 we were divided up and we allocated ourselves onto Cargo Watches until 20:00

December 10th 74 - Rosyth.

Soundings with the carpenter after which we were supposed to grease hatches etc. but intermittent flurries of snow caused a postponement. Instead, we worked in the Quality Control Room, cleaning up the stainless steel sink unit. Also we were able to complete painting all the bulkheads as there was no condensation, being that the Boilers etc were shut down.

13:05 Covered Q.C.R. deck with oil dispersant liquid and scrubbed the deck so it would be ready to complete tomorrow, with a coat of Admar, followed by the green topcoat.

December 11th 74 - Rosyth.

08:05 Soundings with the carpenter followed by an undercoat of red admar primer on the Quality Control Room Deck.

At 10:40 we greased all the ullage caps and plugs on the tank deck and "forecastle". This proved to be an all day job and we finished at 16:30, when we had some of the dogs on the hatches done also.

16:30, assisted in lowering the jack mast up on the focsle as the Signalmen were preparing to sand and varnish it.

YET ANOTHER PROGRAMME CHANGE:-
DEPART ROSYTH ON SAT.DEC.15th FOR PORTSMOUTH.
NO LONGER WITH THE ROYAL YACHT, INSTEAD, THE ARK ROYAL TO THE WEST INDIES.

December 12th 74 - Rosyth.

08:05 Soundings of the cofferdams.

09:05 Took the ships draft and freeboard and this revealed a list to starboard. After reporting the findings, we worked with the chippy but the trip to the mill was called off and rescheduled for 09:30 tomorrow.

13:13 Visit to the sail loft which proved to be extremely interesting, especially the life raft testing and repairing section, While we were there, a liferaft was opened and inflated and a routine check was started on it. We were told of several interesting facts with regard to the liferaft.

Weight approx. 470lbs. Cost £1,070

Internal temp. would be about 70° when the air outside is at 32° if five men were inside. We also looked around the "colours" area where flags etc. are made; I was amazed at the amount of work involved in making them.

December 13th 74 - Rosyth.

08:05 Last day doing the soundings of the cofferdams and fresh water. After this we took some timber ashore to get it cut and also the chippy had to replenish his supply. After going around to the limber yard, we went to the boat workshop where the wood was unloaded and we had it planed and cut to the required sizes.

11:00 Returned to the ship to get instructions about going to the Main Gate to receive the Captain's Guest and bring him aboard.

At 12:45 I met the Captain's Brother and led him to the Cabin.

13:05 Proceeded with study.

December 14th and 15th 74 - Rosyth.

08:05 Took ullages of Furnace fuel oil in wing tanks number one and six. This was followed by Rule of the Road and the Flag Signals Test. After an early lunch, harbour stations were called and we let go of some of the forward ropes and coiled them up.

After the ship was clear, we secured the anchors for sea.

When we were stood down we were permitted to study and work on the correspondence course.

December 15th

Check through record books and correspondance course. Painted and stencilled flight deck ear defenders, then concluded correspondance course.

During the evening we had a sing-song practice for Wednesday's Party.

December 16th 74 - Sea to Portsmouth.

08:05 Reported to Bosun to work on deck and our first duty was to start clearing the centrecastle as new stores were soon to arrive. Numerous coils of wired were stored after difficulty, in the foreward hold. I had an eleven bells lunch as we were to be on the bridge by 12:00 for our entry into Portsmouth. I filled the movements book in until we finally dropped the port anchor as Spithead Anchorage. We remained on the bridge until 14:15 as we wanted to see how the ship would lay. (PLOTTED POSITION DOWN ON CHART ETC) For the rest of the afternoon, cadets of Port Watch continued clearing up the hold (coil ropes).

In the evening the cadets had a carol practise for the party on Wednesday.

December 17th 74 - Portsmouth.

08:00 Worked on lifeboats checking equipment and finally painting on the names and numbers and tidying some of the others.

Harbour stations were called at 12:50 and after the pilot was aboard, we got underway with the assistance of four tugs, we slowly steamed into the harbour and secured at the Oil Fuel Jetty at 15:00

Again, I kept the movements log, recording engine movements and various bearings.

At 15:15 we were allowed ashore and we went into Gosport to do shopping.

After the 18:30 code practice, all cadets went and had a "dress rehearsal" of carols for tomorrow.

December 18th 74 - Portsmouth.

08:05 Worked on deck chipping and top-coating and when stores arrived at 10:45, all cadets assisted in transporting and stowing them. The job continued throughout the day because the bond issue also arrived and it all had to be inspected and stowed.

We finally completed storage of the first barge load at 16:25 when we were stood down.

The Christmas party went off very well and everyone was full of the Christmas "Spirit" (HICUP!) It was an enjoyable evening filled with good humour and ridiculous gifts!

[AUTHOR'S NOTE 2013: my anonymous 'gift' was a miniature gold-finished chipping hammer fixed to a mahogany board. I think it was crafted by the 2nd Engineer. At the time, I wondered if there was any connection between my 'golden chipping hammer' and 'the golden rivet' !]

Thursday December 19th 74 - Portsmouth.

08:16 Check through our record books with Cadet Training Officer after which 3 cadets took clothing (ARCTIC) to the store warehouse in the Dockyard. After returning, we all immediately worked on storing the 600 kegs of beer which had arrived. This lasted throughout the morning and it wasn't until 13:00 that it was aboard. After completing storing the beer, we were stood down and remained on Standby until 14:30. In the meantime, we opened and greased the tank lid on three port after which we cleaned up and proceeded on Christmas leave until January 3rd - 75 (A welcome break).

Transcription for January 1975 will be added early-Nov. 2013.

In future instalments, RFA OLWEN goes SouthWest to the West Indies and beyond, the Cadet Training Unit rigs a derrick and the CTO puts me straight on the unique flavour of Devon water !

