

# Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Magazine.



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Vol. I. No. 1.

MARCH, 1934.

THE  
ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARIES MAGAZINE.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Editorial ... ..	1
Editorial Announcement ... ..	3
Births ... ..	2
A Tale of the Sea ... .. Port Bower	4
Motor Mix-up ... Our Special Correspondent	8
Under the Yellow Anchor ... ..	10
How to run a club .. Wunoose Adsum	13
The Merchant Navy in Parliament. ...	14
A Chinese Lullaby ... ..	15
Unspecific Gravities ... Lancelot	21
Around and About ... Scrutator	22
R.F.A. Directory, Malta Station. ...	25
Cricket Season 1933 ... Sports Editor	27
For the Male of the Species ... ..	28
Letters to the Editor ... ..	29
Small classified advertisements ... ..	31
Answers to Correspondents ... ..	31
Competition and order form ... ..	"

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS.

*All applications for advertising space in this magazine should be made to the Advertising Manager, c/o Sapienza's Library, Strada Reale, Valletta, Malta.*

*As space is limited an early application is advised. Matter for the next issue should be in hand not later than May, 5th. 1934.*

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### ERRATA.

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Page 12 line 36.—Delete *Languedoc*.

Page 12 line 39.—For R.A.F. read *R.F.A.*

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# The R.F.A. Magazine.

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VOL. I. No. 1.

MARCH, 1934.

Published quarterly.

Price Sevenpence.

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## EDITORIAL.

We have much pleasure in presenting the first issue of the R.F.A. Magazine to Officers of the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Service. The feasibility or otherwise of producing a magazine catering solely for the R.F.A. Service has been many times discussed, but up to the present no decisive step has been taken in this direction. Towards the end of the last year, a small but enthusiastic coterie set to work to transform the evanescent idea into a concrete accomplishment, and we present herewith the result of their earnest endeavours. Our readers may be aware of the difficulties attendant on the introduction of any departure from established custom and tradition, and we can assure them that the production of the first issue of this journal has been made possible only by much real hard work on the part of those responsible. One of the first obstacles that we encountered was the question of finance. Each copy of this magazine costs more to print than the price at which it is sold, and in addition there are, of course, many other items of expense. However, this question was to a large extent settled by the sale of advertising space, and although at the time of writing we do not know the exact amount of space sold, there is reason to believe that the budget will just about balance itself. The original groundwork having been thoroughly completed, future issues

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of the magazine will not necessitate such careful planning, and consequently the work will be much smoother. Naturally, the Sponsors of this enterprise are awaiting with anxiety the reception that will be accorded it. Further issues will only be made possible through the co-operation of those members of the R.F.A. who are interested in the venture, and we appeal to them to support us literary contributions, sketches and photographs, and last but not least, by becoming regular subscribers. A form to facilitate the ordering of the magazine will be found elsewhere in this issue. It is in no wise the desire of the Editorial staff that this publication should be considered in the light of a chronicle of the Malta Station, or that it should be considered as the official organ of the R.F.A. Club, Malta; but rather that it should be looked upon as expressive of R.F.A. views everywhere, and thus become a link between the various stations. To this end we ask that some interested officer on each station will forward us authentic Station notes and news. We especially request that *bona fide* suggestions and constructive criticisms on the policy and general conduct of the magazine be sent us, and it is hoped that when criticizing the magazine, readers will bear in mind the tremendous amount of work involved in the production of the first issue, and will treat us with that forbearance for which the R.F.A. is justly famed. In conclusion, may we also hope that readers will tell us whether they appreciate the magazine or not, in order that we may test general R. F. A. opinion as to whether a continuance of this magazine is desirable.

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**BIRTHS.**

LANNING:— On January 29th 1934 at Alexandra Nursing Home, Plymouth, to Winifred (Née Thomas), wife of Alfred G. Lanning, — a daughter.

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## EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

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Contributions of any description are urgently required for inclusion in the next and subsequent issues.

All contributions should be written legibly, or more preferably typewritten, on one side of the paper only. A nom-de-plume may be used if desired, and anonymity will be strictly preserved. Sketches should be black and white, and photographic prints should be clear and distinct.

Letters to the Editor should be brief and to the point, and although a nom-de-plume may be used, the name and address of the sender must be appended, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

The Editor will always be pleased to place space at the disposal of the Secretary, R.F.A. Club, for the purpose of disseminating club news to members; but no responsibility will be accepted for the correctness or otherwise of news so published.

It is anticipated that the next issue will be published in May 1934. Matter intended for publication in that issue should be received not later than 1st. May, 1934.

All communications should be addressed as under and not to individuals.

The Editor,

R.F.A. Magazine,

c/o Sapienza's Library,

Strada Reale,

VALLETTA.

MALTA.

## A TALE OF THE SEA — MODERN STYLE.

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BY PORT BOWER.

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There is no doubt that the publication of the first number of the R.F.A. Magazine will cause many pens to be busy, and that many of those with literary aspirations will commence to spoil much good paper in attempting to produce something that will pass the editorial blue pencil.

Editors' regrets are the very devil — to avoid them one must keep to the track that has been made by those who produce the best sellers; so at the Editor's special request, I am going to give here a few hints on how to write the present-day type of the sea story.

The hero of modern magazine sea fiction is a strange lad — a type unto himself. He is about thirty to thirty-five years of age; rugged of features, of strong moral character, silent, sober, and utterly unused to the ways of woman and of any other society save that of the sea. He is, withal, of the stuff that made England what she is.

His qualifications include a Master's certificate, yet in spite of this, he has never risen above the position of mate of a small schooner running about the South Sea Islands.

It is never quite clear why he is in a small schooner at all, or what possessed him to buy the tiny share in her which he sometimes owns. However, he is there and the author must get on with it.

With a calm disregard for port regulations, this craft enters and leaves harbour when she likes and how she likes. Cargo is of no consequence — her primary duty is to provide a home for the wandering mate. He has no sunny cottage or semidetached in the South country, no joyful reunions with loving relations; he may have a widowed mother of whom he is the sole support, but he never sees her.

For him the rolling sea; usually the rolling Pacific; no prospects of promotion; merely a vista of years ahead to be spent in the old schooner which is his only home.

He sails from pearling station to trading station, earning money in some miraculous manner without cargoes; never spending any, yet always broke.

The ordinary diversions of his fellows appeal to him not — of women he knows nothing; the mild flirtation has passed him by. None of your moonlight under the trees for him; the art of telling the tale is as the mysteries of the unfathomable deeps. He knows nothing of Grant Road or the glad eye down Pleinz Street on a Saturday night. His lips are pure and unsullied.

During the lonely watches of the night he communes with nature, the while the sails flap, and the schooner upon which he depends for a living and the support of his widowed mother, idles away her time and gets nowhere.

He does not know it, but he is waiting, keeping himself unsullied by contact with the outside world, and waiting for the advent of SHE.

SHE usually arrives about the second chapter, and.....  
SHE is wonderful!!

Not too tall, with a face of unsurpassable loveliness, an adorable nose, rose-bud mouth, a complexion to be likened only unto a peach, and clear grey eyes like limpid pools. Her hair is a mass of glorious curls that riot in the breeze and sometimes blow across the mate's face, to start that unfortunate man babbling like an idiot about silken strands or some such similar trash.

Money is of no consequence to her; she rolls in it, and in the absence of the customary bathing facilities, laves herself in it.

For some very obscure reason, she ships in the schooner, and promptly starts to fall for the mate of the rugged features. Goodness knows, he gives her no encouragement, but she doesn't need any.

She has the figure of a Greek goddess, sometimes it is referred to as being like a lithe young willow; there are modest references to graceful curves, and with the help of her flimsy, cool looking frocks, she loses no opportunity of letting the poor victim have a good eyeful. It is sheer waste of good material, however, for he is far too bashful to look at a sight that many hard working mates would give much to have the chance of seeing.

She brings only a hand bag, yet each evening she appears as a figure of ravishing beauty, clad in a new diaphanous something that must have cost a young fortune.

She murmurs sweet things to him, because, forsooth, he is of the type for which she has looked for years; at least, for the twenty-one with which she is credited; he is so different from the lounge lizards to which she has been accustomed.

At this stage it appears that she has become satiated with dances; parties, night clubs and the fawning attendance of her numerous admirers, whose admiration seems largely centred round her bank balance.

Nature for her all the time now, with the mate as the great leader of the clan.

A few references to silks and dainty underwear may appear at this part ; it is now permissible ; and he, the boob, blushes. She thinks it delightful — such glorious innocence — a silk clad leg appears to make him tremble.

Then she lets him have the full blast of the contents of her vanity bag, plus a dainty little evening frock that three months of his pay wouldn't buy, plus also a single string of diamonds about a couple of feet in length, plus a few other oddments such a full moon over a coral island, a heavenly Pacific swell, a gentle roll of the schooner, several honeyed words, a tinkling laugh — and he, the poor mutt, falls for it.

What else could one expect ?

But he does not tell her so. No, not he ! He is made of sterner stuff than that, at least he has the sense to realise that his pay would just about keep her in lip-stick ; and she admires him the more for it. She knew he would be like that. HER MAN.

To clear up the difficulty, it becomes necessary for the author, who has arrived at this messy stage, to engineer a scrap.

It is unfortunate, but absolutely essential, otherwise they would never be married off.

The poor blighter who is chosen to be beaten to a pulp at the hands of the lefty mate is usually the skipper ; and this explains why the mate is always a mate, and never rises to the dizzy heights of command. The dark secret is out at last ; the skipper is a half-caste Portuguese without the morals of a tom-cat or the decency of a Chinese brigand.

He curses like a trooper, is never properly dressed, and — nasty man — drinks rum. He makes a living doing something he shouldn't, such as pearl poaching, stealing, or abducting beautiful maidens. He drinks all the day, sleeps all the night, and leaves the mate to do all the donkey work.

The cause of the quarrel is easy. He has either seen too much of the silken clad legs, which were not intended for him anyway, and possibly also, had too vivid an imagination and took more than his fair share of the scenery when the Greek goddess leant up against the wind ; or else he is after the string of diamonds to replace the cable which is becoming worn out.

Whatever the cause, he is after her, but the mate is a wise lad ; he is up to his game, and, of course, rallies to the aid of beauty in distress.

The mate, it should have been mentioned earlier, is some fighter. It is now recognised by the majority of well informed

writers of sea fiction, that a mate to be a mate, must be a lad with the gloves, otherwise discipline would go to the dogs.

He is never quite up to the methods of the Portuguese skipper, however, for the latter, having been to no decent school, and never having been anything but a Portuguese half caste, knows nothing of the laws of storms applicable to fights, and is really a skunk ; a fact which the reader probably found out quite a long time ago.

Fights are dear to the heart of the magazine reading public, and are now considered a necessary part of all good stories of the sea which depict shipboard life as it really is. At one time it was permissible for the girl to fall overboard, but this has become too tame, and in view of the competition of blood-curdling stories of the sea which appear on the films, has had to give way to the back-to-nature fight, in which guns, knives, chairs, belaying pins, teeth, and even fists take part, and for which the refined, delicately natured damsel has a ring-side seat, and which she thoroughly enjoys.

At least she enjoys it so long as the man who is carrying her money is doing well, but when the skipper gets on top and starts to batter the mate's face into the semblance of a mixed grill, she finishes off the fight herself by konking the skipper on the head with his own belaying pin.

She knows just how and where to hit, and she lays him out well and truly for the full count ; and at this stage the mate faints from loss of blood.

All the best authors do this, and there are several good reasons for it. The mate must get the girl into his arms somehow, and she must be given a chance to mother him, and whichever way you look at it, a girl cannot start the mothering stuff upon the hefty mate of a schooner when he is in the full possession of his faculties. The reader is also becoming impatient because the ass of a mate cannot see what is waiting for him, and the author is probably getting fed up anyhow, and cannot hang the agony out any longer.

This is the stage we have all been waiting for. The mate comes to, to find his head on her lap, and beautiful words coming from her lips. His blood is scattered all over the ship, and part of the aforementioned silk undies is now wrapped round his brow to quell the flow of blood.

"My Hero! My MAN!" says she.

"My dream girl!" murmurs he ; which is not too bad for a beginner.

Then he gathers her into his arms, and she, who has been angling for this ever since she stepped into the story, resists slightly and then gives way to his powerful embrace.

The reader sighs happily; but what of the poor mate? The story always seems to leave him at this stage.

Obviously, he cannot stay on in the ship after his wife-to-be has hit the skipper over the head with a belaying pin. It simply isn't done; so it is but natural to suppose that she transports him to her beautiful ancestral hall, where he probably spends his time thinking of the old schooner, and wondering what the devil he can do with his spare time now that he has no watch to keep, and no Portuguese skipper to cross swords with.

But we can leave him there. After all, he has had a perfectly rotten time and is entitled to some compensation.

Let us hope he gets it!

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**MOTOR MIX-UP ON MARINA.  
DISTINGUISHED MERCANTILE OFFICERS CRASH.  
MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM DEATH.**

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(From Our Special Correspondent  
and British Unofficial Press).

During the Christmas festivities two well known Clubmen had a miraculous escape from death. It appears that their conveyance, a mechanically propelled vehicle, navigated by a skilled Jehu, came into collision with a two horse dghaisa during the dead of night.

Our Special Correspondent, the Akhound of Swat, who is well known in the Island, was on the scene not later than three weeks after the occurrence, and was thus, as always, first on the spot.

The locale of the accident presented an amazing spectacle, the body of the horse, the carcasses of the officers, the wheel of the dghaisa, and sixpence in coppers all being irretrievably mixed. All was silence save for the faint calling of the Wanga-Wanga bird to its mate.

Hastily seizing the sixpence — for safe keeping — Our Special Representative repaired to the nearest hostelry in search of stimulants. Bringing the brandy back to the scene of the debacle, he hastily gulped it — for he imagined that he perceived a movement on the part of the carcii — and then very carefully scrutinised the scene of the accident, in case there should be any more change in the vicinity.

It was only when, during the course of searching the ground, his hands inadvertently wandered into the pockets of the officers, that they came to life.

Hastily seizing the drosky driver, they relieved him of all his loose change, and together with the Akhound, repaired to the nearest tavern, there to form a quorum and discuss matters. At the time of going to press they had not yet left the bodega, but the body of the drosky with his pockets turned inside out has been discovered on the Marina.

The two Gentlemen who were involved in this dastardly outrage will be readily recognised when we state that they are both handsome, and as is correct in cases of this kind, slightly sunburnt. It was entirely due to their demeanour that a panic, and consequent drought, was averted.

It is understood that International complications are brewing in the Chancelleries of Europe.

#### SPECIAL NOTE BY OUR MOTORING CORRESPONDENT.

The regrettable motor accident in which two R.F.A. officers were involved, and which is reported above, brings home to us very forcibly the grave dangers to which motorists are liable in the Island of Malta, and at such a time, a brief review of the particular difficulties to be encountered does not seem out of place.

The most sensible of all who use the roads today are undoubtedly the goats. I refer to the four-legged variety; the other kind are — well, just goats. But the four-legged ones are the cutest little fellows; all you have to do when you meet one is to blow the horn and they immediately toddle off to the right side of the road.

One little drawback is that they are usually on the wrong side, so that this minor matter of horn tooting becomes necessary. The snag arises when the fellow on the other side of the road toots, and you get the whole outfit of a prosperous goat owner coming toddling along to your side of the road when you are doing fifty of the best in your second-hand Morris.

It costs five pounds to run over a goat — I believe I am correct in saying that you can run over a mere pedestrian for thirty bob, and a dog runs to about ten bob; a cat, of course, runs like hell.

Point-duty policemen come a bit expensive — about four pounds to four pounds ten according to their seniority. I have heard, however, that it is not considered the thing in the best circles to take point-duty policemen in one's stride, as it were; it is definitely more sporting to shoot them on the hoof. There is a certain point of honour in these matters, to which one must bow. Furthermore the winter months are the close season for policemen.

Dghaisas are not allowed on the first class roads, but they are occasionally to be met with there, during the Christmas season; and it is recommended that they should be given as wide a berth as possible. When meeting two or more sailing in company or under convoy (vide Art. 13) reference should be made to *Notice to Mariners*, No. 1 of each year. As recommended in Art. 17 the bearing should be very closely watched for a few minutes, and it is advisable during this initial period of observation to ease down to something under three knots. If encountered under way in double line ahead, it is best to pass between each pair of dghaisas — this has been found by experienced Clubmen to be the most successful method. If, however, there is an odd number, or they are coming along three abreast, it is best to heave to on the star-board tack, as one is evidently in the dangerous semi-circle.

The hints given above are the results of many year's experience, and they are printed in the hope that they may be of assistance to readers of this journal, and prevent a repetition of the lamentable accident referred to earlier.

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### UNDER THE YELLOW ANCHOR.

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The article which appears below is the first of a series dealing with the early history of *The Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Service*, and describes coaling at sea, the forerunner of oiling at sea with which many of us are familiar.

We are deeply indebted to Mr. T. Perrett, Chief Engineer Officer of R.F.A. "*Maine*" for the information on which this article is based.

1905. Coaling at sea was carried out in pre-war days was undoubtedly the precursor of our modern oiling at sea. The first ship to be fitted with gear for coaling at sea, was the chartered collier "*Muriel*". The gear fitted was the well known Temperley Patent Transporting Gear. In this method of coaling a wire was run from the mast of the collier to the quarter deck of the vessel to be coaled and the baskets of coal ran along this wire. So far as is known this method was not satisfactory.

1907. The next ship in connection with which the experiments were carried out, was H.M. Sloop "*Basilisk*", she being fitted with a patent gear devised by Senior Engineer METCALF R.N. This gear, having proved very successful in the smaller ship, it was decided to charter a large collier to test the system out under more severe conditions. The collier "*Torrilidge*" of 6000 tons being chartered for this purpose, the gear from H.M.S. "*Basilisk*" was transferred and fitted into her.



Metcalf's gear consisted an endless wire which ran over special pulleys fitted to the winches on the collier, and thence led over a tail block fitted on a tripod on the quarter-deck of the vessel being coaled. The slack of the wire was taken up by a steam ram fitted on the deck of the collier.

The coal, which was carried in bulk in the collier, was bagged by the working party into two-hundredweight bags, and to each bag was attached a special spring hook fitted with spring jaws at the top. On being held by a sailor the jaws of the hook sprang open, thus allowing the hook to be slipped on the endless wire. The bag then ran down the wire to the quarter deck of the vessel being coaled, where, on reaching the tripod, a special trigger released the hook and allowed the bag of coal to fall to the deck. Empty bags and hooks were returned to the collier in a similar manner.

1907-1908). The next experiments in connection with this gear were carried out between s/s "*Torridge*" and the battleship "*Hannibal*" at Spithead. The collier was towed by the "*Hannibal*" at ten knots and the rate of coaling was about thirty tons per hour. Further experiments were carried out in Torbay with similar results.

After this, more ambitious trials were undertaken and "*Torridge*" was taken in tow in Barry Roads by "*Hannibal*" and towed to Torbay at a speed of ten knots. The average rate of coaling on this trip was seventyfive tons per hour, which was considered highly satisfactory.

After a few minor alterations to the "*Torridge*" which were carried out in Torbay under the direction of Metcalf, further trials were arranged to be held in Torbay. These however were not carried through to a successful issue. While the collier was being towed by "*Hannibal*", with a wire out from each quarter, course was altered, and for some unknown reason the weight of the tow came on to the coaling wires and thence on to the tripods, causing them to collapse.

Following this disastrous incident the gear was reconstructed and it was decided to load the collier with three thousand tons of bagged coal at a Bristol Channel port, the battleship "*Montague*" being detailed to take the collier in tow from Barry Roads. The test however, was not carried out owing to the "*Montague*" running ashore on Lundy Island, and becoming a total wreck. Incidentally it may be of interest to know that the then owner of Lundy Island claimed the "*Montague*", asserting that it was jetsam and therefore belonged to him. "*Torridge*", and the distilling vessel "*Aquarius*" which was then under the Blue ensign, was sent to the scence to stand by with salvage stores. After remaining by the wreck for some time, "*Torridge*" left and was employed in running cargoes to Portsmouth, before finally going to Pembroke Dock to have the coaling gear dismantled prior to going off charter.

The personnel of the "Torridge" consisted of the usual Merchant Service crew, in addition to which were carried, one Senior Engineer, R.N. one Warrant Artificer, R.N. one dockyard fitter, and thirty naval ratings, these last beings, carried for instructional purposes, and for keeping the gear in working order. Metcalf, the inventor of the gear, was the Senior Engineer in charge, and the vessel so far as movements were concerned was entirely under his orders.

All the coaling gear was carried in the collier and a method that was sometimes used for transferring it to the battleship prior to coaling was for the collier to fire a rocket and thus establish communication. The gear was then hauled on board the battleship and rigged for coaling.

A working party of from two to three hundred men was supplied to the collier by the battleship, and the scene during coaling operations bordered on the grotesque, the rig of the working party being incredibly bizarre. As no restrictions were imposed, opportunity was taken by the working party to dress as pigtailed Chinamen, Red Indians, or in any other fanciful garb.

The next event of importance was the purchase of the "Mercedes" in 1908; this and other events will be described in our next issue.

The R.F.A. fleet at this period (1908) consisted of the following units:—

R.F.A. "Kharki" built 1899, and bought in 1900.

*Captain S. Williams. Chief Engineer, Mr. Fox.*

R.F.A. "Petroleum" built 1902, completed 1903 & bought 1905.

*Captain J. R. Williams. Chief Engineer, Mr. A. Hunter.*

R.F.A. "Isla" built 1903, bought 1907, for carrying petrol in drums, was employed in carrying smithy coal, and finally converted into a bulk petrol carrier for submarines, the work being completed in 1910. *Captain R. N. Smardon* was her first Master during her petrol carrying days. *Chief Engineer, Mr. Davis.*

R.F.A. "Maine" presented to by Great Britain by the Ladies of the American State of Maine during the Boer war.

*Commander Dunn* being *Captain Languedoc* and the Chief Engineer, *Mr. T. Richardson.*

*Chief Officer, Mr. Lloyd. Second Officer Mr. Moon.*

R.A.F. Chartered vessel, s/s "Torridge".

The only officer at present serving in the R.F.A. who served in the "Torridge" is *Mr. T. Perrett*, who was Second Engineer Officer of the vessel.

The R.F.A.-s at this time came under the Director of Transports, *Admiral Groome.*

(This series will be continued in our next issue).

“HOW TO RUN A CLUB”.

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BY WUNOOSE ADSUM.

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1. Don't come to the General Meetings.
2. If the weather doesn't suit, don't think of coming.
3. If you attend a meeting, find fault with the work of the Executive Committee.
4. Never accept an Office, as it is easier to criticise than to do things.
5. Nevertheless, “get sore” if you are not appointed on a Committee, but if you are, do not attend the meetings.
6. If asked by the Chairman to give your opinion regarding some important matter, tell him you have nothing to say. After the meeting tell everyone how things ought to be done.
7. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary ; but when other members help willingly, and unselfishly use their ability to help matters along, howl that the Club is being run by a Clique.
8. Hold back your subscription as long as possible, or don't pay at all. This is a great help.
9. Don't bother about enrolling new members. Let others do it.
10. If anything is passed by the Executive Committee that does not meet with your approval, immediately resign; this helps the Club considerably, and proves that the Club could be run by you.
11. If the indoor games Secretary advertises that a whist drive will commence at 2030, come along to 2130 or even later; it cheers him up, and enables members having a long distance to go to indulge in the expense of a taxi, when a bus would suit their pockets better.
12. Support the bar as much as possible; this helps the Club considerably.
13. Never come to a definite conclusion about how dances should be run; this is a never failing source of entertainment to the Committee during their discussions, and leaves them in a happy and contented frame of mind. They then anxiously await the next meeting for further enjoyment.

## THE MERCHANT NAVY IN PARLIAMENT.

January 15th. 1934. The SPEAKER took his seat at five minutes before four o'clock.

307. Mr. William Barnacle, (C. Betwixt-and-Between) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the attention of his Department had been directed to reports, appearing in the daily press, that a Third Officer in the Merchant Navy had during the last financial year, banked £10 and further that the said funds had been saved out of the Officer's salary.

(Colonel Bloodstock-Dashington, (C. Much-Liquor-on-the-Mud) here interposed to ask, "what are Third Officers and what is the Merchant Navy?" The SPEAKER replied that the question was too long to go in to at the moment, but that a special Royal Commission would be immediately appointed to go into the matter. It was expected that their report would be ready in the spring of 1935. (Geo; V & VI, Ch. 876. ff 345.)

308. Rising to reply to the member for Betwixt-and-Between, the President of the Board of Trade thanked his Hon. Friend for his information. but stated that his Department were in possession of all the facts, which had been thoroughly investigated. He went on to say that the Hon. Members of this House were well aware of the unreliability of the Press, and that as had been expected the reports were false. He further asked his Hon. Friend, the Member for Betwixt-and-Between not to refer to the earning of sea-faring Officers as salaries but as wages. His Hon. Friend should remember that when dealing with these rugged men of the sea, one should use words that they would understand, and not abstruse technical terms.

817. The report on the recent Cuban Bandit outrage, in which three Merchant Naval Officers were imprisoned, was read. A proposal brought forward by the Almagated Union of Deck Officers that the released prisoners should be compensated, was sternly negatived. (During the reading of this proposal three Shipowners fainted). Sir Charles-Apenta Water (L. Brixton) moved that as it was the expressed opinion of the Officers concerned that the only difference they had noticed, between their ship and the Bandits' lair, was that they were better fed by the Bandits, that a larger messing deduction should therefore be made in respect of the time that they were imprisoned.

The House then went into Committee, the SPEAKER taking his seat as Chairman.

The Bill for the provision of soap to Merchant Naval Officers (Consolidated Soap-Mercantile-Bill 1934-III) was read for the first time. This was negatived without the House going into Division.

This concluded the business on the order paper, and the House rose at eleven minutes after ten o'clock.

## A CHINESE LULLABY.

BY PETER INNE.

Day was breaking over the city of Shanghai. The grey of early morning was paling the street lamps as they swung from their tall standards. The hoarse shouts and yells of the rickshaw coolies on Bubbling Well Road mingled with the cries of the hawkers down the side streets. Odours of mysterious Chinese foodstuffs came from the stalls in the streets, where the coolies were already squatting on low stools with their chow bowls and chop sticks. Along the streets of the Chinese quarter, the quaint coolie-drawn barrows were taking their loads of a dozen girls each to their daily labours. The pavements were a mass of moving, jostling humanity. A great Eastern city was coming to life.

The waterfront was a scene of feverish activity; launches, junks and innumerable sampans, with their yelling owners, were eager in the search for business. From Soochow Creek, which, during the night had been packed solid with small craft, sampans were now making their way to the broader waters of the Whang-po, to add the seeming confusion and noise.

On the Bund everyone was in a hurry—coolies, well-dressed Chinese, a few Europeans—all seemed desperately anxious to get somewhere else; all, that is, with the exception of one solitary figure dozing fitfully on one of the seats facing the water.

He was a European; so much could one see at first glance, but he was strangely out of keeping with the few others of his race who were about. He was dirty, dishevelled and unshaven; a seeming outcast from the world.

As the first rays of the sun came over the tops of the buildings and alighted upon him, he started into semi-wakefulness and looked around.

Where was he, and how did he come to be there? He passed his hand over his face and eyes. He had vague recollections of having left the ship the previous night, very late—it must have been about midnight. He had come alone—none would accompany him, for he was then already well soaked. In his befogged mind were still faint memories of the trip up the river from the White Funnel Wharf where his ship was lying.

He tried to piece together the happenings since then, but his mind refused to function. A conglomeration of scenes passed through his head; weird, grotesque, uncanny. He rubbed his hand over his eyes and unshaven chin. Visions of low drinking dens,

of Chinese singing girls, and of a room where men lay on low settees and smoked — yes, smoke ; that was it. The air had been full of it — he remembered how it had choked him, and how he had staggered out into the early morning air. There were other scenes, too, but he could not piece the bits together ; there seemed to be a crowd of silent coolies around him at one time. That struck him as rather strange, for they usually kicked up such a row.

Some thought was struggling in his mind for recognition — what was it? He couldn't quite grasp it, but it was something of importance, he knew. Idly he put his hand in his pocket and drew out his wallet — it was empty. That sobered him a little — when he left the ship it had contained two hundred and fifty dollars.

He tried to reckon it up ; two hundred and fifty dollars at two shillings a time. No, he couldn't do that just now — he would leave it until later, but he knew it was a lot of money ; more than a month's pay. What was his pay? Sixteen pounds a month. He grew angry at the thought. Slogging out his soul case in this heathen country for sixteen pounds a month. What was it he was trying to remember? He must think of it soon, for it was important. Sixteen pounds a month — he ought to get more than that. He would have to see someone about it. But he had nearly forgotten ; two hundred and fifty dollars ; his expenses for a night's binge never ran to more than fifty, even when in his most extravagant moods. Someone must have lifted it. Yes, he had it — those silent coolies — that was why they had been so quiet.

He had met them when coming out of the place with the smoke — opium it must have been ; he was a fool ever to have gone there. Well, he would know better next time. He cursed himself for a fool ; there would be no next time.

He put his hand into his trousers pocket and wondered what he had better do now. His right closed on something and he withdrew it. Two dollars and sixty cents ; that was better than nothing — it would buy him a drink and pay his boat fare down to the ship. He gave a start — that was what he had been trying to remember — the ship. He must get down to the ship ; she was sailing at nine for Hongkong. Still, he had plenty time ; it could not be more than six or seven o'clock.

He lifted his hand to look at his wrist watch, but that was gone, too. He thought of his money again, and swore hard as he thought of the coolies who had robbed him. They must have been disturbed to have left him with his odd change, or else they had not bothered with coins when they had such a good haul. Anyhow, he would just have time for that drink, and then for the boat back to the ship.

He rose from his seat and was about to slouch away, but found his way blocked by a fairly well-dressed Chinaman who had been eyeing him for some time. The bland face broke into a smile as the bloodshot eyes looked at him.

"You are looking for a launch? he enquired.

There was very little trace of accent, or of the pidgin English usually associated with Chinese.

The Englishman straightened himself. "Yes, but I want a drink first," he replied.

The Chinaman appeared anxious to help. "Most of the places are closed, but I know where you can get fixed up. Come along," and he proceeded to lead the way to the other side of the busy thoroughfare, his companion, still slightly befuddled, following him.

His guide led him along the Nanking Road, and then they branched off down one of the side streets, into an evil-smelling alleyway, through a low arch, and then—a couple of coolies stepped from the other side of the arch and took the Englishman by his arms, one on either side. He had not much strength with which to resist, and if he had, it would have availed him little; he was helpless.

His smiling guide ran his hands quickly through the Englishman's pockets, but his smile departed when he discovered the sum total of his find was two dollars sixty cents. He spoke a few words to the coolies, and they methodically stripped their captive of all his clothes with the exception of his shirt, trousers and socks.

Then they left him and went over to their leader, who gave them thirty cents each and put the remaining two dollars in his pocket.

The Englishman turned livid as he saw the last of his cash disappear. Then he thought of his trip back to the ship, and of her sailing at nine o'clock. He approached the Chinese and addressing himself to their leader, said: "Fifty cents for me, to get back to the ship."

The Chinaman looked at him blankly, then with a slight expression of disdain, turned away, and in a few seconds the Englishman was alone.

Slowly he made his way back to the Bund. The incident had cleared his brain somewhat, and it was working as rapidly as the effects of his night out would allow.

He must get back to the ship, yet he had no money to pay his way. Nobody would lend him any in his present state, or even look upon him as anything more than one of those down-and-outs who frequent the waterfronts of the East, looking for a cheap drink.

His ship sailed at nine. That thought kept burning itself into his brain. He had no desire to be stranded in Shanghai, to become one of those outcasts whom at the present moment he resembled. Passers-by looked strangely at the queer figure he presented as he made his way towards the Bund. He kept to the side streets as much as possible, to avoid notice, and when he was compelled to take the main street, he kept close to the side with his head down, to make himself as inconspicuous as possible.

It was nearly nine as he came in sight of the waterfront again. He slouched over to the seat from which he had started out on his last disastrous search for a drink, and bent his head on his chest, wondering what was to happen next.

Bells ringing out on the ships at the buoys brought him back to the immediate present. Nine o'clock; his ship would be sailing. He was beginning to feel hungry; he had eaten nothing since dinner the previous night; and his thirst was becoming more acute.

Idly he looked out over the river. A British cruiser was lying at the British Naval buoys, and as he watched, a smart launch left her side and came to the Bund close to where he was sitting. He wrinkled his brows; surely they would help him out; they knew his ship — they had been in company many times.

Eagerly he made his way to where the launch was drawing alongside. As she made fast, a couple of stewards jumped out, on the way to do the mornings marketing.

"Hi! Jack!" hailed the Englishman. "Can you give me a passage off to your ship?"

"Blimy, Dusty," said the coxswain, who was thus hailed, "did you hear that? Wonder what the bloke'd say if we took this scarecrow back?"

The Englishman explained his position to the crew of the launch. The coxswain looked at him enviously when he had finished. "Struth! what a night you must a been an 'ad." he said. "You'd better come aboard and see the Commander, and tell him all about it."

## II.

The Commander of H.M.S. "Gaunt", who was standing on the quarter deck, started back in amazement, then looked again to make sure he had made no mistake. No, it was real; a short, dumpy figure about five feet one in height; dirty, bedraggled and unshaven; dressed, if such a word would describe his rig, in a pair of blue serge trousers, a pair of socks and a shirt. The shirt neck was open, disclosing the hairy chest beneath. The eyes were bloodshot, and the figure slouched onto the quarter deck and gazed around. Catching sight of the Commander, he made his way towards him, and then paused.



The Commander went red in the face and his collar seemed to grow tighter as he gazed at this blot on his holy of holies. He tried to take a deep breath, and his fingers clutched convulsively at nothing, while his hands moved slowly up and down as though anxious to grasp something hard and crush the life out of it.

"What the — — —?" Words failed him — he tried to express himself in words suitable to the occasion, but he could think of none that really filled the bill. Not in that way, anyhow, so he fell back on plain English.

"Who are you, and what the devil do you want on my quarter deck in that rig?"

"I'm from the — ." He mentioned his ship and rank — slowly the words came out. "I came ashore last night — by sampan — it was late — I had plenty of dollars — I....." Bit by bit, in short, stilted phrases, the story came out; the landing, the events of the night, so far as the vague recollections would allow; the more vivid events of the morning, culminating in the final episode of the well-spoken Chinaman, and then the return to the Bund.

He warmed up to his story towards the end, and the Commander listened sympathetically, asking no questions until he had finished.

"Your ship has sailed; we had the information an hour ago. It is too late for you to catch her, even at Woosung. Had you reported here half an hour ago, we could have held her up and sent you down. You had better go below and I will see what can be done for you."

He summoned an orderly. "Take this man below and give him some food." He thought awhile and gazed hard at the Englishman in his scanty attire. "You would not mind going in the Petty Officers' mess?"

"I'd be glad to go anywhere for a meal," was the reply, and the Commander heaved a sigh of relief. The vision of the wreck before him going into the wardroom of the "Gaunt" for his breakfast had been almost too much for him.

"When he has had some food, you can take him to the supply petty officer and give him this chit." He wrote a note as he finished speaking, a note authorising the Englishman to be supplied with any necessary articles from the paymaster's stores.

The Englishman followed the orderly to the lower deck and the Commander went below to report the strange affair to his captain.

### III.

It was two weeks later; the Englishman sat in his cabin engaged in an abstruse financial calculation.

He had spent ten days on the cruiser before he was able to leave for Hongkong to join his own ship.

Accommodated in the petty officer's mess, he had been fairly comfortable. His adventures during his night out had been of inestimable entertainment value, and after the first uncomfortableness had worn off, he had retailed them with added details that lost nothing in their repeated telling.

He had had good food, nothing to do, and had been supplied with a rig-out, which, if they did not fit like a Bond Street suit, at least brought back some faint semblance of what might be termed self-respect.

At the end of ten days his passage had been booked in a coast steamer, and he had returned to his ship to face the consequences of his absence from duty.

The paper before him as he sat in his cabin contained his efforts to estimate the cost of his disastrous night out. It ran as follows:

Initial Capital. 250 dollars @ 2/-	£25 0 0
Pay stopped during absence from ship. Half a month @ £16 plus 20%	9 12 0
Ten days messing on the "Gaunt" @ 2/- per diem.	1 0 0
Cost of kit supplied from paymaster's stores.	3 5 0
Passage from Shanghai to Hongkong 90 dollars @ 2/-	9 0 0
One "civvy" suit in lieu of one stolen.	7 0 0
One "civvy hat. do. do.	10 6
One pair of "civvy" boots. do.	1 10 0
Incidentals. (Rough estimate)	2 5 0
	<hr/>
	Total £59 2 6

He sighed, pushed the paper into a drawer, and rose to his feet. It was half past three — just time to try and raise a "sub" from the "old man" before he went ashore.

### UNSPECIFIC GRAVITIES.

*Editorial Note.....The R.F.A. Magazine, always on the qui vive in the interests of its distinguished clientel, have, at great expense, secured the services of the talented Dustbin Sifter, Lancelot Cavendish Smythe; who comes to us fresh from his London success as Gossip writer on the staff of that snappy Society rag, "The Dirt of the Town."*

Looking in at the Club last night, who should I see but the dear old Duke of Angostura. "Bitters," for so he is known to the *Cognoscenti*, hailed me with delight. "Whatho! Stinker", he cried, for the dear old fellow loves his little joke. "Bungho," I replied, blushing to the roots of my moustache with pleasure at being recognised by one of the Haute Monde. After all, those are the things that count, aren't they, girls?

With him at the billiard table was Tivington-Browne, the svelte third officer of the "War Stewpan." "Tiffy," as we love to call him, was leaning negligently on his cue, the self-same cue with which he hit the winning boundary during the Lacrosse Test Match against the Wazoos at Twickenham.

As I left the Club, I saw that famous diplomat, the Akhound of Swat, trying to slate one up in the bar. As he saw me, a light of hope dawned in his eyes, but I, knowing the signs, and having only 2<sup>d</sup> in my pockets, made haste to leave. I assure you, girls, a touch was positively trembling on his lips. Positively!

Flying over to Gozo in the new Imbeerial Airways liner yesterday, I found myself sitting next to Claudie Vavousour, the scintillating second of the "Tobaccolleaf." He had a wart on his nose, and he told me that he was going to Gozo Spa to have it removed by auto-suggestion, by a doctor in Rome. Wonderful things, these modern innuendos.

I looked on board the "Cabbageleaf" yesterday and saw dear "Chiefie," as he is affectionately known to all his creditors. He had just finished turning up an enormous 240 carrot diamond ring on the lathe. He told me all about it as we sat sipping our "Crude and Caustic," his latest cocktail.

It is all the talk of the clubs that young "Chimpie" Gush has bought a new platinum sextant. They say he can get forty-five to the gallon out of it. How jolly it must be, riding up and down the harbour decks on it during moonlit nights.

Well, tiddley-um-tum girls, I must rush, as I have to have my Perm this morning.

Your Lancelot.

## AROUND AND ABOUT.

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BY SCRUTATOR.

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There are undoubted signs that the depression in the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries, which, after all, was merely a repercussion of the general state of shipping; has reached its worst phase, and that we may look to the future with more equanimity than for some considerable time past.

The recent promotions — or should we call them re-promotions — of two Chief Officers, may be taken, so far as the Navigating Branch are concerned, as indicating that the period of stagnation in promotion is coming to an end. There are, however, still a few Second and Third Officers who have held acting appointments in higher ranks, who are also hoping to step back to their former positions.

On the Engineering side, the blockage in promotion shows no such sign of coming to an end, and there is no diminishing in the number of Second Engineer Officers who have had to give up the fourth ring which they had so hardly earned. There have been persistent rumours that some of the laid-up ships were to be brought out of their cotton wool wrappings at Rosyth, but so far, they have been without foundation.

One brighter spot in the general outlook is that one hears much less these days of Officers having to take a spell of enforced idleness "on the beach", without pay, and it may be that this very deplorable state of affairs is now at an end.

Whilst we were passing through that stage it was no pleasant thought that the leave which one had looked forward to so much was to be followed by a spell without pay and without knowing when the next appointment would come along. It took most of the pleasure out of the holiday when one had to commence the most rigid economy from the beginning, in view of the possible unemployment in the near future.

\* \* \*

The topic of the day on board ship is undoubtedly the Merchant Navy Petition to Parliament, asking that an enquiry may be held into such matters as pay, apprenticeship and conditions generally.

The Petition was the subject of a debate in the House of Lords on the 20th. December last, but it did not have a very favourable reception. However, we must feel grateful for the support accorded by several distinguished peers, and particularly for the manner in which Earl Beatty spoke of the Merchant Navy.

As reported in a contemporary the principal opposition, apart from that of the Government, came from a noble Lord who admitted representing, as chairman of shipping companies, one eleventh of the total mercantile tonnage of the United Kingdom. Reading of this opposition one's thoughts naturally go to the shipowner who died last year leaving thirty million pounds.

In view of its unfavourable reception, Earl Howe, who introduced the Petition, withdrew it in order to present it again at a more favourable opportunity. There is good reason to hope, however, that some attempt will be made to rectify the unsatisfactory conditions which were the subject of Petition, and if this is so, the good work of the sponsors will not have been in vain.

In the so-called "good old days", each trade had its Guild to deal with its own affairs, and they were in direct touch with Parliament. Froude, the eminent historian, referring to these old Guilds in his "Reign of Henry VIII", says:

"A central council sate for every branch of trade.....It was composed of the highest and most respectable members of the profession, and its office was to determine prices, fix the rules of apprenticeship, and discuss all details connected with the business on which legislation may be required."

From the Guilds developed the present-day livery companies, of which the Honourable Company of Master Mariners is the youngest, but the old powers do not appear to have descended with them.

The present petition, coming from the Officers of the Merchant Navy, through the Officers' Federation, is an indication of how the powers and responsibilities of the old time Guilds have been allowed to lapse.

\* \* \*

An advertisement appearing in recent issues of the Malta papers brings us to one of the final chapters in the passing of the old "Perthshire" from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service. She is to be sold as she stands, and apparently without any restrictions as to her future. She has had a long period of service in the R.F.A. and there will be many who will regret that this fine old ship is to be passed along. Age, however, leaves its mark on even the finest product of the shipyards, and so she has to go.

It is a little over three years since the "Kharki" was sold, after some thirty years of good service with the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. She was well known throughout the Navy, having been one of the "old originals", first as a collier, and later, after conversion, as a tanker. She spent the last few years of her life on the China Station, and at the end of her period of usefulness was sold to a Chinese firm for breaking up. A few years prior to that, again, the "Ruthenia" went to her last job as a hulk at Singapore.

To the older members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries, the passing of these old timers must be as landmarks — or seamarks — in their careers.

\* \* \*

The press has given much prominence recently to the agitation of the National Federation of Teachers for the restoration of the ten per cent cuts in salaries. Without belittling the teachers and the value of their work, we venture to state that the service rendered to the country by the Merchant Navy is quite as vital, and that any restoration of cuts could well be in the direction of those who man our Merchant Fleets.

The improvement in trade throughout the country, the increased activity in the shipyards, and, more significant still, the increased revenue derived during the past few months by the Suez Canal Company — always a good index to the state of trade — are all signs of more prosperous times ahead, and tend to show that the financial position of the industry is such, that, if only in common fairness, a restoration of the Merchant Navy cuts cannot now be long delayed.

\* \* \*

By the time these lines appear in print, Mr. W. J. Gick, C.B.E. will have taken over control of the Naval Store Department, as Director of Stores, in succession to Mr. J. W. L. Oliver, C.B., C.B.E.

While wishing the former a successful period of office, we at the same time extend to Mr. Oliver our best wishes for many happy years of retirement. We shall always gratefully remember that it was during his period of leadership that the R. F. A. Officers' Pension Scheme came to fruition, notwithstanding that they were difficult times for new expenditure to be brought before the Treasury.

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## R.F.A. DIRECTORY — MALTA STATION.

The Editor request that he may be notified of any inaccuracies in the following list, in order that they may be rectified in the next issue of the list.

The symbol \* against the name of an Officer indicates that he is a member of the R.F.A. Club, Malta.

Name.	Rank.	R.F.A.
* Ansell. C.N.	Ch. Eng. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Beed. G.T.	Ch. Eng. Off.	Cherryleaf.
„ Brain. H.C.A.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Maine.
* Brooke. P.H.	2nd. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Card. T.H.	Ch. Off.	Cherryleaf.
„ Carlyle. M.N.	Ch. Eng. Off.	Reliant.
„ Christopher. C.R.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Brambleleaf.
Chudleigh. A.J.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Reliant.
Curtain. A.E.	2nd. Off.	Plumleaf.
* Downing. W.G.	3rd. Eng. Off.	Maine.
„ Durrant. L.T.	W.T. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Evans. A.W.N.	W.T. Off.	Reliant.
„ Field. G.	W.T. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Fielder E.S.	2nd. Eng. Off.	Boxol.
„ Finch. F.L.	2nd. Off.	Reliant.
* Foster. R.N.	4th. Eng. Off.	Maine.
„ Gibson. W.C.	5th. Eng. Off.	Reliant.
„ Griffiths. W.E.	3rd. Off.	Reliant.
„ Hardy. A.H.	Master.	Reliant.
* Harmer. F.R.	3rd. Eng. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Hawthorne. J.E.	2nd. Eng. Off.	Maine.
„ Higgle. R.	3rd. Eng. Off.	Cherryleaf.
* Hill. L.N.	Ch. Off.	Reliant.
„ Holtam. W.L.	3rd. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Jones. J.H.	Master.	Plumleaf.
„ Kernick. S.C.	2nd. Off.	Maine.
* King. F. J.	3rd. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Lanning. A G.	W.T. Off.	Maine.
„ Lavers G.T.	4th. Eng. Off.	Reliant.
„ Lawrence. M.J.	2nd. Eng. Off.	Reliant.

Name.	Rank.	R.F.A.
* Lawson. B.W.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Cherryleaf.
„ Mc Lelland. J.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Cherryleaf.
„ Martin. G.W.	2nd. Eng. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ MacDonald. A.	Ch. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Miller. A.	4th. Eng. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Monk. F.E.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Reliant.
* Morton. E.B.	Ch. Eng. Off.	Boxol.
„ Neyroud. R.C.E.	Master.	Cherryleaf.
„ Oldridge. E.H.	W.T. Off.	Cherryleaf.
„ Paul. J.H.	Electrician.	Maine.
„ Pearce J.S.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Maine.
„ Perrett. T.	Ch. Eng. Off.	Maine.
„ Perry. L.	2nd. Off.	Boxol.
„ Prout. H.J.	Ch. Off.	Boxol.
„ Putt. R.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Reliant.
„ Rowell. H.W.	Junr Eng. Off.	Cherryleaf.
„ Scanlon. R.D. (Lt. Cmdr. R.N.rtd)	Ch. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Scott. C.	3rd. Eng. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Selves. G.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Shaw. F.A.	2nd. Off.	Cherryleaf.
* Sherriff. W.	5th. Eng. Off.	Maine.
„ Sigwart. E.E.	3rd. Off.	Cherryleaf.
„ Sinclair H.M.	Master.	Boxol.
* Sinclair A.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Reliant.
„ Smardon R.N.	Master	Maine.
„ Snowdon. D.B.	3rd. Off.	Maine.
„ Soper. G.	4th. Eng. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Spenser. A.	Ch. Off.	Maine.
„ Summers. S.J.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Taylor. L.H.	Ch. Eng. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Taylor. W.L.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Tomlinson. L.	2nd. Eng. Off.	Cherryleaf.
„ Turner. C.W.C.	3rd. Eng. Off.	Reliant.
* Walker. J.H.	4th. Off.	Maine.
„ Williams. R.D. (Cmdr. R.D.R. N.R.rtd)	Master.	Brambleleaf.
* Wills. W.S.J.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Brambleleaf.
„ Woodland. V.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Woods D.S.	2nd. Eng. Off.	Plumleaf.
„ Woodward. R.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Maine.
„ Wright. E.L.	Junr. Eng. Off.	Cherryleaf.



SPORT.

MALTA

CRICKET SEASON 1933.

Under the able captaincy of L. Miller, the cricket team had quite a successful season in 1933.

Prior to the Fleet leaving for the Summer Cruise, the R.F.A. Club team, playing on most Wednesdays and Saturdays, had seventeen matches, of which they won nine games and lost eight. There were no draws.

B.N. Beasley, with a score of 274 runs, headed the batting averages with 16.1.

A. J. Miller, who took 45 wickets for 383 runs, averaging 8.51, was top of the bowling averages, followed closely by L. Miller, who, with 29 wickets for 253 runs, averaged 8.71.

The members of the team were all very keen and seemed imbued with the team spirit, there being always a long waiting list for membership.

The matches which were held during the season were as follows:—

R.F.A.	120	vs.	Minesweepers	154	at	Manoel.
„	116	vs.	Minesweepers	128	„	Manoel
„	60	vs.	Bulldog	91	„	Marsa..
„	81	vs.	Codrington	60	„	„
„	90	vs.	Maine	75	„	„
„	52	vs.	Beagle	93	„	„
„	91	vs.	Bacchus	46	„	„
„	126	vs.	Worcester	31	„	„
„	77	vs.	Ardent	74	„	„
„	49	vs.	Delight	46	„	„
„	69	vs.	Delight	86	„	„
„	161	vs.	Delight	137	„	„
„	77	vs.	Arrow	157	„	„
„	43	vs.	Bulldog	101	„	„
„	149	vs.	Bacchus	38	„	„
„	89	vs.	Bulldog	52	„	Mancel.
„	88	vs.	Anthony	97	„	Marsa

## FOR THE MALE OF THE SPECIES.

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At the moment of going to press, we have — in response to numerous requests — had to rush this column into print. Our fashion Editor spent some anxious hours with the local tailor and cutter, Mr. Snip.

Fashions this spring will be quite different to those that were the vogue during winter. The most important change is that collars will be worn longer, that is to say, they will be sent to the laundry once a month instead of once every three weeks as heretofore.

Tailors' bills which are two years overdue will be renewed for a further three years. This especially applies to our bills.

I must now sound a word of warning to young and impetuous officers. Really, boys, purple shirts with orange bloblets do not go very well with uniform mess kits. Another point is that spats should not be worn, or umbrellas carried with this kit. If you chaps want to give rein to your *joie-de-vivre*, there is plenty of room for this in the field of underwear, where you can indulge your undoubted perfect taste for colour, to your hearts' content.

Those who know, have anticipated fashion again this year by having a chaste little pzerxtopxl painted on their thighs. If you write to me in confidence, fellows, I can give you the address of a good thigh-dauber, and don't forget the stamp.

Now, dear juniors, I have a bit of good news for you this week. You all know Mr. Raisin, the eminent tailor, cutter and charger; well, he has designed a snappy new line in boiler suitings. Each garment has a dinky little badge on the pocket where you keep your calipers, and can, by the action of a small switch located under the armpit, be converted into a deerstalker hat with flaps for the ears. They are just the thing for informal at homes. If you go down to Mr. Raisin and mention my name, he will build you one to your own measurements. The one he created for me has a cute little gigolo on the pocket.

Now, blokes, before I finish my notes I must tell you about a new invention. You are all familiar with that entrenching tool, the domestic fork, and are all aware of its limitations in the amount of food that it can pick up. To cope with this disability a well known firm of Charlotte Street have invented a patent browsing-spanner. The instrument is rather peculiar in construction, having two jaws with serrated edges. The instrument is plunged into the food and on pressing button B, the instrument functions, lifting at a conservative estimate, three pounds of assorted messing.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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*The correspondence pages of the R.F.A. Magazine are open to a free and temperate discussion of all matters of interest to members of the R.F.A. Service, and are on no account to be taken as the opinions of the Editorial Staff, the letters being solely the opinions of the writers.*

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Sir, — Everyone is, of course, aware that the present deplorable condition of shipping has led to absolute stagnation in promotion, but I do not think that this is any excuse for the methods which certain young gentlemen are now using to weigh up their chances of promotion.

In the good old days of quick advancement in the profession, when every Third Officer carried a Ship-Chandler's address book in his kit bag, no one worried much about promotion, but now it has become a very pressing matter.

As soon a "War" boat comes into port, young officers can be seen snooping around with a general eye to the health of the Chief and Second Officers and Senior Engineers. They are diagnosed with the skill of a Harley Street specialist, and the probable length of time before their final retirement from the R.F.A. Service weighed up to a minute.

It is just the same on Station, and I think that there is nothing more disconcerting than, on taking a stroll down Strada Reale, to find myself subjected to the cold, calculating stare of a junior, who is weighing up the chances of my early demise.

I think that the R.F.A. Club should be asked to do something about it.

Yours, etc.

C. 3.

Sir, — It has ever been the prerogative of the sailor-man to grouse about his ship, however good she may be, but it is also a generally recognised fact that when he does so, it is not because of any animosity he may feel towards her, but because it has become the accepted thing to do.

The Englishman is famous for his reticence in displaying his affections or his loyalty, or of appearing to have any of the emotions of the average human being. In the sailor-man, this amounts almost to a disease, and in his anxiety to allow none of his pride of ship to be visible to the outside world, he goes on the other tack and reviles her as the worst son of a gun that ever came off the stocks.

There is a certain amount of suggestive force, even in such a mundane matter as "the daily growl". Constant reiteration is sufficient to convince a man's inner self that the statements made are true, and thus, that which commences from force of habit or as part of a time-honoured custom, may become eventually a cause for dissatisfaction and discontent.

Another aspect of it which is liable to be overlooked is the effect upon others of hearing people belittling their own ship and the service of which she is a unit.

In a comparatively young service, such as ours, tradition, if there is to be any, is in the making, and it is the duty of those who desire their ships and service to be well thought of, to foster the pride within the service. They are the ones on whom is the responsibility of disseminating good opinions and showing to others the pride they feel in their service. The humour of it, if there is any, can be seen and appreciated, but it should be the humour that leaves behind it no sense of deprecation. Reflection on one's ship is a reflection on the service as a whole, and if we are to rise dignity or leave behind any semblance of tradition, it can only be by showing to others the pride we feel in our service and history.

The history of the Merchant Navy should be fostered and treasured from within its own ranks, and it should be our privilege to add to its prestige. The Merchant Navy has a history that is the envy of the world. We have but to think of such men as Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, James Cook and John Davis to realise this. In the Royal Navy where they spent part of their sea careers, their names are honoured and revered; in the Merchant Navy where they learnt their business as seamen, they are passed by with no thought of the honour and glory they brought to our profession.

During the late war, the merchant seamen of the present generation made history to be added to that of their distinguished forbears. The dignity of it is still with us; we live in an age when history — our history — has been made.

Pride of ship; pride of service. The cultivation of these will pave the way for us, also to make history and tradition, even if not in quite the same way as did those great seamen of the past. We can, however, by our words and actions, uphold the dignity of a profession that is one of the most vital to our Country and Empire, and also the dignity that should be ours — in this service — it being associated with the Country's first line of defence — the Royal Navy.

Yours, etc.

"Counter-flory".

### SMALL CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS.

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(Small classified advertisements may be inserted free by R.F.A. officers).

**FOR SALE.** An Edge-bar sextant. Has been very little used, owing to owner having spent large periods of time on Station and on the beach. Kew A Certificate. What offers? Apply Box 1, care this paper.

**FOR SALE.** Fine collection of postage stamps, will bring joy to the philatelist's heart. All going at quarter catalogue price. Apply Box 2.

**WANTED URGENTLY.** Three capable, energetic, and willing writers to take over stock features in this journal, (one each.) Applicants must be stationed in Malta in order to be in touch with the editorial office. Must be good at writing up from notes, and capable of absorbing large quantities of abuse. For the right men good prospects, with an occasional dip into the editorial cigar box. Apply in writing only — personal applications not required — to the Editor.

**WANTED.** Small single-handed sailing dinghy complete with sails. Willing to pay £6 for suitable boat. Apply Box 3.

**FOR SALE.** Mess kit, has only had one previous owner and is in excellent condition with no beer stains down the front. Would accept £2 or nearest offer. Apply Box 4.

**FOR SALE OR DISPOSAL.** Last quarter's copies of Punch and Bystander. Any cash so obtained will go to an orphanage (Seamens'). Apply Box 5.

**WANTED.** A second hand copy of "The Mercantile Navy List," not later than 1931. Apply Box 6.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

---

L.S. Has left the R.F.A. Service. We have no information as to his present whereabouts.

DIDATIC. (a) Two years and six months. (b) None stated.

P.L.T. Can be obtained from any Naval Outfitters or from Moss Bros., Shaftesbury Avenue, but it would be as cheap to buy a new one.

CHALET. (a) Are held three times a year. (b) We do not advise you to do this.

INSTRUMENT. Any optician will do this for 7/6.

F.T.P. (a) Bought in 1907. (b) Not known. (c) Try Foyles, Charing Cross Road.

K.H.O. (a) As far as we can ascertain you would be entitled to £116 on retirement. (b) Not before 1942. (c) One year's full pay.

CHATS. Put an advertisement in our classified ads: page.

K.G. (a) Can be obtained on application to the Chief of Police.

SEC. (a) 7½%. (b) £12. (c) Statesmen's Year-book 1930, page 91.

GUSSET. An article on this subject will appear in the next issue of this mag: Thanks for the tip.

XLEAF. ¼ glass lemon juice, ¼ glass Kina Lillet, ¼ glass Cointreau. ¼ glass brandy. Shake well and strain into a cocktail glass.

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Second choice.....

Third choice.....

Name.....

Address.....

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Please forward to the address below, the R.F.A. Magazine quarterly for the ensuing year. I enclose postal order, money order for two shilling and ten pence.

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(Th above sum (2/10 is for four issues of the magazine, which will be forwarded post free)

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