

When our stay of several days came to an end and we were back on the open sea. It was surprising how light most nights were and how plentiful ~~were~~ the stars. Of course the pole star and the Great Bear ~~it~~ had sunk low on the northern horizon.

One morning going out to the bridge I reported a spicy smell of land which sent the navigator ("Vasco") hurrying to his charts. Somewhat relieved he returned to announce that Colombo was 96 miles off. Shortly afterwards we saw Adam's Peak (2243m) c. 100 ft.

Colombo harbour was most attractive and the town itself with its vegetation including flamboyant trees a welcome change from the arid landscapes we had become accustomed to. The aircraft carrier Indomitable was present and the Royal Marine Band stirred the patriotism that in some cases may have become somewhat latent.

Nurses ashore were generous and I saw my one and only case of "Black-Smallpox" so called because the "feshars" ran together and well nigh covered the body surface. As usual the patient died. The Galle Face Hotel was a typical refuge for the "Raj".

We moved to Trincomallee - the largest natural harbour in the world but without much in the way of shore facilities.

About this time occurred an incident of which I am a little ashamed. The Eastern Fleet was operating in the Bay of Bengal. One evening our Captain, perhaps impressed by our position on the starboard quarter of the Indomitable, with the C in C aboard, announced that the officers would dine with him in the ward room, and don No 10s. Well I only had one set of No 10s and with little prospect of getting them laundered did not see much point in this tiresome order.

normal
appearing in the rig of the day - the
captain said "If you are not going
to change, doctor, you will dine in your
cabin on your own." Thank you Sir
I would prefer it. The next morning
I was sent for to be told that I was
totally unsuited for the Navy and that
he was recommending my immediate
transfer to the RAHC. Shortly after this
the Fortune was signalled to come
alongside the Flagship and I was
hoisted aboard and shown to a
spacious cabin complete with telephone
In due course I was seen by the C-in-C's
secretary. After hearing my story
he told me that Cdr. Pankhurst had
~~was~~ never been the same since he was
hit on the head by a telegraph pole as
a midshipman. He had been on his
motorbike at the time. As they were a
medical officer short at the time I was
taken on and had quite a pleasant
few days until the cruisers Dorsetshire
and Cornwall were sunk by Japanese
aircraft in the vicinity. Two destroyers
were detached to pick up survivors - one
was the Fortune. It was remembered
that she had no H.O. The Fortune
returned alongside and Bam
left the luxuries of a capital ship and
no further mention was made of the
matter.

Soon after this we were en route for
Batavia (now Jakarta). In the early hours
of the morning a signal, in cypher,
directed to Fortune and a gradual
test. Immediate was received. When I
unpicked this it came out about the "Bishop
of London's breasts". I thought it might be
a code within a code and after a
further ~~check~~ ^{check} took it to the Captain. He
was not amused. I then realised that we
did not carry the latest decipher books
as we had filed at sea and had

failed to make our customary weekly
harbour call. We were due in Batavia
at 08.00 but the captain decided to
break radio-silence and request a
repeat in last week's code. In due course
this came and I quickly injected the
startling message that Batavia was
in Japanese hands. I suppose at this
stage we were a mere 40 miles off
the capital of Java. He steamed off
away at top speed for Singapore.
Sadly the vast harbour was hidden by
a dense sea-fog and apart from the
ghostly shapes of other shipping and
intriguing images of exotic landfalls
nothing was to be seen and no shore
leave was given as we had only called
to oil and renew our confidential books.

Back to Trincomalee to find the Eastern
Fleet had fled and that Ceylon had been
evacuated and removed to Hombsassa
because a Japanese invasion was
expected.

It was about this time that I noticed
extreme listlessness and loss of appetite.
One day I climbed up to the bridge to
be greeted by the captain with 'What
has happened to you doc - you look
like a bloody Chinaman. I am dice.
Had I shaven in natural light I might
have noticed it myself - but it was
some time since I had seen myself in
daylight and I suppose I thought my
wound was concentrated because of
the tropical heat. I was admitted to
the R.N. Hospital in Colombo and quickly
recovered but the Fortune had gone
to join the Fleet in Hombsassa and I was
hastily converted into a orthopaedic
specialist and invited to join a
most comfortable mess in town. This
large bungalow had been taken over
by three R.N.R. medics on the hospital
staff. Needless to say an adequate

and efficient civilian team had been engaged to keep house. The only fairly minor disadvantage was that my three mates were homosexuals and did not realise their mistake until I had moved in.

For some not very obvious reason the Navy had established an Aircraft Repair Base at Coimbatore in Southern India, and in response to an urgent request I was despatched to sort out their medical problems.

Coimbatore - though further from the sea than I had ever been - was quite civilised with a cinema and English Club. The cinema used to hold up the showing of a film until we arrived and settled down. It was pleasant in the nearby Nilgiri hills at Ootacamund and Wellington, mainly, I suppose because it was much cooler than on the plains. There was quite a good golf course bordering on the jungle which led down to Mysore and eventually Madras. It was whilst playing round this course that a tiger leisurely walked across the fairway ahead of me.

After a few weeks the medical affairs were sorted out and I returned to Colombo. No peace - the Navy had decided in its infinite wisdom to take over the R.A.F. station at Puttalam, which had been abandoned because of, amongst other things, a malarial problem. Puttalam was about 70 miles North of Colombo and thus well within range of the capital. It was on a lagoon and there was excellent sea-bathing nearby. The sea was rough and murky and populated with *banaranda*, but it was at least cool.

The Officers' mess was in a large building that had been the equivalent of a Town Hall. In the grounds were numerous recently erected ^{wooden} buildings providing accommodation.

for the ratings plus sick pay etc.

I must have spent some months at Puttalam and there was plenty to do.

I entered the battle against the Anopheles mosquito with some enthusiasm and procured a Harley-Davidson motorbike plus side car to tour the island and map out the mosquito population. An impressive map was produced and decorated the M.D.G.s department for some time.

Sometimes in the early morning, I would head out on the Harley Davidson, with the armaments officer (named Siowright) in the sidecar to shoot jungle cock on the verges of the roads. These grass verges (about 10-15 ft wide) separate the usually well-surfaced roads from the dense jungle in which such interesting animals as elephants and leopards could be found. In fact Siowright kept a leopard cubs which did not like me very much.

The "Toothie" (dentist) was a chap from Edinburgh called Jim McGowan. Quite normal, apart from the fact that he honestly believed he could swim, he couldn't. When we went bathing he would happily plunge in and soon be out of his depth and in need of rescue. He had with us a pilot from Australia called Tubby Billings. He was a superb swimmer, built like an outsize prop forward, and he looked after Jim and rescued him when he thought he had had enough. In peacetime he had been one of the Bondi beach patrol and was up to all sorts of diverting tricks such as swimming at speed submerged except for a foot out of the water like a periscope.

There was a nice little church at Puttalam with a jolly Sinhalese parson who was really quite lazy and I was happy to take matins for him on a Sunday morning when he felt like a lie-in. Of course this was an abbreviated service as there was a limit to what I was authorised to do.

The local hospital was a primitive affair

and I did not have much contact with it. I did however earn the undying gratitude of the local police inspector. His little boy of seven or eight years was dying ^{with} ~~from~~ gastro-enteritis and he begged me to ~~come~~ and give a "second opinion". The child was severely dehydrated and responded miraculously to intra-venous fluids.

There was a continual battle to keep the jungle at bay and the runway clear. Eventually we were given about 500 Italian POW's to help in this task. They were certainly more effective than the locals. (The Sinhalese were lazy and held most of the sedentary posts in the island, whilst the Tamils from S. India were energetic and "got things done") From my point of view the Italians were a dead loss as they nearly all had venereal disease and needed constant treatment with injections etc.

*Geoffrey
Parrish
At Puttalam I shared a cabin with an interesting fellow* from the West coast of Scotland who ~~cleverly kept~~ in swimming in the tides. I was impressed by the number of oranges he consumed. He had been rejected as a pilot in the RAF (something to do with the muscle balance of his eyes) However the Fleet Air Arm accepted him and he became their star fighter pilot. Periodically he would disappear to engage ~~to~~ his Japanese counterparts in combat so that he could report on their tactics.

He also ran a course for Royal Marines training in jungle warfare. The first batch that came were pretty raw and seemed not to have explored much beyond the Mile End Road until they found themselves sweltering in the tropical heat and blinking in the bright sunstroke of Puttalam. In fact they must have been transported by sea (Some 6 weeks from the U.K.) and had lectures on the way. Now a days they would no doubt be flown out in a Hercules in a few hours. However one morning in the Sick Bay I was startled by the arrival of much loads of RMs holding their stomachs and vomiting

Rather stupidly they had been eating some green berries! The sergeant had thoughtfully brought a specimen of a castor oil seed. I was alarmed to find on reference to my text book that they were poisonous especially if eaten with their husks on and three of them were likely to be fatal. These chaps had averaged half a dozen each. I hurriedly got in touch with the R.N. medical specialist at Colombo for advice. "Hang on" he said. He returned and read out ~~from~~ the text that I had already perused. He commiserated with me but could not be of any additional help as he was as ignorant as I was on the subject. I arranged what treatment I could for the symptoms and sat down, glomily to contemplate the communique to the Medical Director General / Admiralty - I have the honour etc etc to report the deaths of the following Royal Marines on active service due to the consumption of castor oil berries (then a list of 26 or so names) and came to the conclusion that it would have been easier to do in the nose and smoke of battle on the high seas than in this tranquil hut on the edge of tropical jungle.

However I am glad to say they all recovered despite swallowing so many husks and all. So much for the text books.

I remember right a 2% casualty rate was permitted as live ammunition was in use but I daresay I would have been taken to task for allowing a 100% mortality from poisoning.

My above mentioned cabin mate would, from time to time, decide that the H.O. should experience the joys of flight and take me up in one of the primitive kites of the early 40s. A swank job I believe because it was open to the weather. He would climb to a great height and then shout to me about a vessel on the sea far below. Lets have a closer deco he would mutter as we screamed down in an almost vertical

dive to pull out at about mast height. It must have scared the crew of the fishing boat nearly as much as it scared me.

On another occasion when the engine cut out whilst flying straight and level I was invited to bail out (I did have a parachute). I asked him what he was going to do - "Force land in the nearest paddy field" was the reply. I decided to sit tight and hope for the best. I had noticed before that as one descended the heat got more and more intense like easing one's way into a hot oven. This time it seemed an even hotter oven but apart from a bit of a bump and a rather abrupt stop it wasn't much different to a normal landing.

Ceylon was a beautiful lush Island but very hot and humid. During the monsoon periods it rained daily at 16.00 for an hour or so - not refreshing. Of course at night one longed for a climate that called for a sheet or even a blanket. Some 7-8,000 ft up in Nuwara Eliya was an English Club with trout streams and a golf course with an occasional post at night a day or two up there made a pleasing break.

An excitement at Pattalam was rare but once a message told us to expect and intercept two Japanese spies who were to be landed at night from a submarine on our bathing beach. About a dozen of us formed a reception committee and duly received the visitors without a struggle. The next day we handed them over with some relief as they were an embarrassment.

Early in 1944 I was relieved and set out for the UK in the Maloja. It must have been an uneventful trip as I remember very little apart from how cold it was in the Suez Canal. Eventually we arrived in the Mersey - a cold grey day in early February I made my way to Lime Street Station with my large crate. The latter caused no problems until I arrived at Ealing Broadway where the "Waff" were too weak to shift

it up the stairs.

Home (46 Leith Road Leith) seemed to have changed little. Pop was on his own and very pleased with his concrete air-raid shelter at the bottom of the garden. Mum was in the country I forget just ^{where} Keith in the fore-runner of the SAS was somewhere in the Balkans I believe. It was Keith who earlier in the war had presented me with a Life Subscription to The Reader's Digest at a cost of £5. A limited number of these were available for those engaged in especially hazardous postings - apparently my berth in the Fortune qualified. I must admit that at the time I would not have classified it as such. After the war I learnt that 75% of "Fleet" destroyers were lost. A high toll and I am glad that I had no inkling of it during my service.

It was pleasant and relaxing at home although I found rationing irksome - the black-out, of course, I was accustomed to.

I reported to the Medical Director General who told me he could offer me one of two postings. Either I could have an exciting and unspecified appointment or I could go and look after the Wrens at RNAS Lombristle. To my eternal shame I chose the latter, as the other turned out to be a Landing Craft on D-day!

The Wrens were incidental at Lombristle which was quite a busy Fleet Air Arm base at the N. Side of the Forth Bridge near Inverleithing. There was a large sick bay augmented by a large private house at Aberdour serving as sick quarters. The medical set-up was headed by Surg. Lt. Col. Pavieri, who had a general practice in Inverleithing and never signed anything. I was intrigued at the volume of "food for the kennies" that we collected from the Sister in charge at Aberdour when visiting the sick quarters. I suppose for obvious reasons transport came from a pool and one was always driven by a woman. Even so I did open one of the packages destined for the PHO's kennies. It contained several pounds of sugar.

Gavin Shaw was one of the other HOs. He was a young and able physician married to a very pretty girl - the daughter of an Edinburgh

physician. They had a flat in Edinburgh which I sometimes borrowed.

My cousin Nancy Scott and her family lived in nearby Dunfermline and were most hospitable.

When the war in Europe ended (May I think) I was posted to "MONARCH" at Middle Wallop in Hampshire. (Mobile Operational Naval Air Base) He trained hard there but were slightly put out that our hostilities were not yet over and the Far East beckoned again.

He were soon on the High Seas bound for Sydney N.S.W. Two incidents are remembered ~~one~~ and both occurred in the Australian Bight. The Med. Officer was F.D. Ommancey (a zoologist from London) and a charming chap. I was watching the effortless plunging of an albatross following our wake when he came and told me a lot about this fascinating bird. Some hours later I was chatting to the Captain and intriguing him with my recently acquired information. Next day I found I was to address the Ship's Company on the Albatross. Serves me right and Ommancey sat in the front row.

The other "excitement" was the removal of an acutely inflamed appendix. At that time I had not embarked on a Surgical career but I had been H.S. to Zachary Cope and Handfield-Jones at St. Mary's and also Casualty officer. Despite ~~several~~ the presence of several more senior H.O.s it was decided I should do the job and choose my anaesthetist. After some thought I selected HAG Winter (I met him again during a G.P. refresher course at Windsor and he remembered the scene better than I do). When ready to begin I sent a message to the bridge - Reduce speed and put the ship's head into the wind. This was ignored. Even so the operation went smoothly and the patient recovered quickly.

The Australian Bight was certainly ~~hugest~~ from the ships were laden and the sea rushing along with great waves and many "white horses."

Sydney, with the "Bridge" but not the Opera

House was most hospitable and the few days we spent there were packed with programmes laid on by local families. I enjoyed an expedition to the Blue Mountains and developed a liking for Blue Gums.

He transferred to the aircraft carrier Indomitable and set out to land and establish an airbase on Borneo. I had been attracted to Brunei and British N. Borneo by the stamps but little expected to actually visit the idyllic spot. He called at Papua New Guinea to make last minute arrangements and then we were on our way. However the Japs surrendered unconditionally, on instructions from Hirohito, and we were diverted to Hong Kong. On the way in we were subjected to Kamikaze attacks by boat and air.

We established ourselves at Kai Tak in the New Territories just outside Kowloon. The run way was short and with hills at one end and the sea at the other it was not popular with pilots. To make things worse we shared it with the RAF but did not communicate with them, thus the Fleet Air Arm could be taking off on the single runway whilst the RAF were landing.

The population of Hong Kong, Kowloon etc was about 500,000 (by the '80s this had risen to 5,000,000 and high rise buildings had changed the skyline beyond recognition)

I was put in charge of the Japanese Post hospital and ~~was~~ did ward rounds with a Jap S.A. and an interpreter. I gathered that it was not done to alter a diagnosis as this gave rise to serious loss of face by the doctor who made the original diagnosis. I was present at an appendicectomy carried out without anaesthesia & strical race.

For a time we lived under canvas at Kai Tak and were much troubled by thieving at which the Chinese excel. Our armed patrols were not much use. Indeed on one occasion they pinched the bed from under the

Officer of the Hatch.

I had a 2nd ambulance at my disposal and used to go into Kowloon to get supplies as a precaution I took a Royal Marine Sentry to keep an eye on the purchases. On one occasion while he was doing this the Chinese removed all four wheels. When I returned I was not best pleased and we had to wait sometime for replacements to arrive.

Another entertainment was JEEP racing in the hills around Kowloon often ending in a dip in the S. China Sea. A/C Hinder of anaesthetic fame, climbed onto an offshore jutting in the altogether only to be shoved off by an indignant china woman with a broom.

As a change from stolid naval fare a meal in any of innumerable restaurants was a great treat and we were always fêted as the liberators I suppose we were.

If one could hitch a lift to Macau for a night or so further entertainment was available mainly in the form of women and gambling. On my visit I noted the three main brothel streets with the wares on display in the windows. The superior one was for mandarins only and each girl had an qiyat with her. The next down was for "officers" and the third for "ratings".

When I returned in at my hotel there was a knock at the door and the manager arrived with a dozen or so attractive girls. Having declined the offer I was settling down when he returned with a fresh batch thinking that none of the original display was to my liking.

A pleasant few months was spent in a rather humid autumnal Hong Kong. The time for demobbing arrived and I took passage to the UK in HMS Sullist Cove which was a very slow naval repair ship. Tedium was to some extent relieved by having to take care of a charming R/C captain being invalided out of the Service with alcoholism.

Apart from challenging other vessels nothing much happened though in the Irish Sea we passed a trawler hauling in its nets. Our

Captain turned about and over the loud hailer shouted "You're the first ship we have overtaken since leaving Hong Kong six weeks ago."

Though previously having served in the "med" it was from the deck of the Sullist Cove that I ~~saw~~ witnessed in all their glory the snow capped Sierra Nevada, on a crystal clear day, 90 miles away.

The novelty of civilian life took some getting used to, and rationing was a new burden to bear. As a doctor I could and did get extra rations of petrol for the Austin A.40. I then proceeded. One of the problems was what to do next. I went to St Albans Mr. Pilling in Lancashire where my uncle Andrew was in practice. His practice had been taken over by his second son Andrew B. Taylor and did a GP locum for a month or so. It was a mainly rural practice with many farms and numerous edible gifts were collected on ones rounds. It was also a v. varied practice and included mid. wifery (of which I had come across little in the past few years).

However I didn't feel it was quite what I wanted and I toyed with the idea of returning to the Navy but finding they were desperate to have me, and realising that, in the unlikely event of my rising to the top as M.D.C., the other Admirals would find me somewhat suspect and that my medical skills would be non-existent I decided against it and returned to my Alma Mater (St Mary's H2). I was accepted as an Ex. Service Surgical Registrar at a salary of £200 a year. In my hurry to qualify I had taken the MRCS LRCP (Joint diploma) in 1940., and as I was on a degree course my first task was to take the finals of the M.B. B.S. (London). This was achieved after a few months work. The exams were notable for two incidents: the examiners in my surgical viva voce were Messrs. Shattock & Boggan. In the pharmaceutical viva Sir Adolphe Abrahams took their place and open as follows
Q. What is the caloric value of a pint of the milk of human kindness?

A. 100. AA. No. Not ascertainable.

Q. What is the caloric value of a banana?

A. 100. AA. No. 80.

Q. Why aren't oysters an ideal ^{only} ~~sole~~ article of diet? - apart from the expense.

A. They are deficient in Vit C. AA. On the contrary they are rich in it. DHB You will excuse me Sir, but a monkey was admitted to St. Mary's fed on a diet of oysters and champagne and it died of scurvy. AA. Very interesting.

I passed and on my way but realised that the unfortunate monkey had been on a diet of sponge cakes and champagne and had succumbed toickets

The MB.BS out of the way, my next goal was an FRCS (England). This entailed two parts and the first (Primary) was quite a hurdle - it meant going back many years to Anatomy and physiology 2nd MB stuff but this time the standard was raised to B.Sc level. I was fortunate in finding an excellent tutor* in anatomy and there was always the latest edition of Sanson Wright to ring up the physiology. The Anatomy tutorials took place in a flat in St. John's Hood and cost £30 for about 30. I remember ~~about~~ perhaps a dozen of us cramming into a small room with a black board and a box of bones. Our tutor resembled rana temporaria and together we assembled the human body in our minds taking it in turns to answer the construction questions. A briefing was held before the exam and the most likely questions were discussed for the written paper. The oral part of the exam depended on the examiner and each was dissected for his peculiarities and the replies prepared. (After the exam one was required to telephone the instructor and report the questions). I personally had Professor Hood Jones and was delighted to be asked the very questions that I had been prepared for.

① What would I have here (indicating his first metacarpal) if I was a marmoset? A. Ham.

② What muscles in the body have an intermediate tendon? A. There are four (q.v.).

(3) What are the attachments of the pisi form bone?
1. There are 14 but about 8 seemed to satisfy him.

(4) What structures pass through the foramen magnum? There are 64 but a dozen or so was adequate.

It took about six months to get the primary, and I was now able to return to clinical work for the run up to the Finals, and this seemed more palatable.

I still had my job at Mary's but now benefitted much more from it. Up to now the financial side had been the raison d'être but now Out. Patients, the X-rays, and the operating theatres combined business with pleasure.

In a further six months or so I was ready for the final F.R.C.S. - two days of written papers and one day of "vivas" in operative surgery, Surgical pathology and clinical cases (either a long one or a lot of short ones). At the end of the day, the day's batch gathered at the foot of the main staircase and the numbers were called. When my number was called I advanced to the Secretary - who would repeat the number and if he said Mr. Bain you had passed and went upstairs. If he said Dr. Bain you had failed and went downstairs collected your coat and sadly went home. Fortunately I had passed and ascended to the Council Chamber at the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields. There beneath the famous Holbein painting of Henry VIII and the Barber Surgeons the ^{Council} ~~examiners~~ were lined up to shake hands and offer their congratulations. After a glass of sherry we departed in a merry mood. I suppose there would be about half a dozen out of perhaps 40.

A celebration dinner was taken at L'Etoile in Charlotte Street as the F.R.C.S. was regarded as a major achievement. Buttrick's was the venue for minor celebrations.

The next problem was to find a job - this was 1948 and a few months before the N.H.S. came into being. I used to look at the advertisement columns