

## Note

This has been compiled from a log book kept by Able Seaman Percy Newell who served on board from 27 March 1944 to 2 May 1946

This was no doubt strictly against security regulations at the time !  
However its makes interesting reading.

Graham Latter

April 2015



Percy Newell

NOTE Joined Ganges at 19 then onto Caprice

Demobbed in August 1946

Newell P L A/B P/JX 547808 HMS Caprice Joined 27 March 1944 – Left May 1946

No 6 Emergency Flotilla

HMS Caesar Leader R07

HMS Cavendish Half-leader R15

HMS Caprice RO1

HMS Cavalier R73

HMS Carysfort R25

HMS Cambrian R85

HMS Carron R30

HMS Cassandra R62

### **August 1945**

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> After a couple of false starts we finally left England for “Destination Unknown”.

6<sup>th</sup> At sea, decent weather, everybody settling down to the fact that we are really on our way.

7<sup>th</sup> Arrived Gibraltar 1700hrs. May stay awhile as we are having more trouble with mainshaft and screws.

8<sup>th</sup> We are definitely going into dock. “Cassandra” who was torpedoed on Russian convoy has been towed down here. We are exchanging screws. She still has the false bows on that were fitted in Murmansk. Everyone is in high spirits after hearing the newsflash of Russia declaring war on Japan.

9<sup>th</sup> Still alongside wall, waiting to go into dry dock. Went ashore about 1400hrs but returned about 1730hrs as it was all very quiet and I suppose I’m not properly adjusted to Foreign Service yet.

10<sup>th</sup> Went into dry dock this morning. Everyone standing by to hear the latest on the Japanese surrender “buzz”. Captain “cleared lower deck” to speak to the crew. He said that whatever happened we should still go East.

11<sup>th</sup> Still in dry dock. Leaving tomorrow for Malta if the job is completed. Went ashore this afternoon and had a quiet but pleasant time.

12<sup>th</sup> Left the dry dock and tied alongside the “Cassandra”. Finally left the Rock at 1900hrs and proceeded to Malta.

13<sup>th</sup> At sea, lovely weather. Exercised “Action Stations” most of the afternoon in preparation of our reception on the other side of the world.

14<sup>th</sup> Arrived Malta 1630hrs. Tied up in Selina Creek. "Milne" and "Musketeer" in harbour but no sign of the "Marne".

15<sup>th</sup> The great news of the Japanese surrender has just come through. Everyone seems to have gone crazy. I went ashore this afternoon but didn't think much of it. Would rather be celebrating in the "Millers". Visited Selina and Valetta. Grand display of lighting and flares from ships in the harbour.

16<sup>th</sup> Big display planned for tonight, official VJ night. Spliced the mainbrace but worked till dusk rigging up lighting. Concern by some of the boys at night, it was very good and everyone enjoyed it.

17<sup>th</sup> Everyone tried to carry on as usual but it wasn't a success as yesterday's news was too great. Were complimented by captain and Captain (D) on the VJ lighting. Best in the harbour.

26<sup>th</sup> 0930hrs At sea, lovely weather. I am getting sunburnt in this climate.

27<sup>th</sup> A number of us landed as demolition party 50 miles west of Mersa Matruh. Completed our exercise and then bathing until we were picked up by this ship who had been doing a practice bombardment farther along the coast. I think everyone enjoyed themselves ashore.

28<sup>th</sup> Arrived at Alexandria during the hottest day we've had yet.

29<sup>th</sup> Berthed alongside the wall. Expected mail has not arrived.

30<sup>th</sup> We went into dry dock this morning with more shaft trouble.

31<sup>st</sup> Still in dry dock but we are hoping to leave in the morning if the work is completed.

### **September 1945**

1<sup>st</sup> We shall not be leaving until tomorrow as the work is not finished. I went ashore this afternoon and bought a No 6 suit.

2<sup>nd</sup> Left Alexandria for Port Said.

3<sup>rd</sup> Arrived Port Said and proceeded straight on through the Suez Canal.

4<sup>th</sup> Arrived at Port Suez and started on our way through Gulf of Suez

5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> At sea, terribly hot.

7<sup>th</sup> Arrived at Aden but still no mail.

8<sup>th</sup> Left Aden for Colombo.

9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> At sea, run into fairly rough weather.

13<sup>th</sup> Arrived at Colombo and at last picked up the mail.

14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Berthed alongside. First boat load of ex-OPW arrived from Singapore. Everyone turned out to cheer them.

16<sup>th</sup> Left Colombo for Trincomalee.

17<sup>th</sup> Arrived Trinco, saw "Virago" and went aboard to visit Les Haines. Had a pleasant evening, left 2130hrs.

18<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> Was overjoyed to receive 1<sup>st</sup> letter from Jean. At buoy in Trincomalee.

27<sup>th</sup> Left Trinco for Sebang, Sumatra.

28<sup>th</sup> Arrived Sebang, nothing but jungle, left for Penang 1700hrs.

29<sup>th</sup> Arrived Penang, Malaya. Went ashore had enjoyable time.

30<sup>th</sup> Left Penang for Singapore.

### **October 1945**

1<sup>st</sup> **October** Arrived Singapore. Went ashore but did not have a very good time.

2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> In Singapore at a buoy.

9<sup>th</sup> Left Singapore 0100hrs, arrived Pidjah 0900. Embarked 300 Jap prisoners amongst them being 5 major war criminals and the chief torturer who is credited of killing 35 Australians and 10 officers.

10<sup>th</sup> Arrived Singapore 2330 and disembarked prisoners.

10<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> In Singapore. I had a visit from Drummond Windows off the Glasgow 15<sup>th</sup>. Gave some children a tea party on 20<sup>th</sup>. I think they enjoyed themselves quite a lot.

22<sup>nd</sup> Left Singapore 1800hrs to meet American Task Force No 5.

23<sup>rd</sup> Met Task Force 0545hrs, guided them into Singapore at 1200hrs. Tied alongside "Cambrian".

24<sup>th</sup> Visited USS "Nelson" quite a nice time.

25<sup>th</sup> Yanks came aboard us, but I think they got rather fed up.

26<sup>th</sup> Left Singapore for Penang.

28<sup>th</sup> Arrived Penang. Went ashore and had a quiet but enjoyable time.

30<sup>th</sup> Left Penang for Sebang.

31<sup>st</sup> Arrived Sebang 1400 left 1900hrs.

### **November 1945**

1<sup>st</sup> Arrived Trinco. Went ashore for a few beers, and certainly had them.

1<sup>st</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> In Trinco at the buoy.

10<sup>th</sup> Left Trinco 1700hrs for Singapore direct.

10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> At sea, good weather except for rain.

15<sup>th</sup> Arrived Singapore 1000hrs.

16<sup>th</sup> In Singapore at anchor.

17<sup>th</sup> Left Singapore 1000hrs for Sourabaya, Java.

18<sup>th</sup> At sea, preparing landing and demolition parties.

19<sup>th</sup> Arrived at Sourabaya. Fantastic war, everybody fighting bar us.

19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> In Sourabaya standing by.

22<sup>nd</sup> Left Sourabaya for Semarang 100 miles to the west.

23<sup>rd</sup> Arrived Semarang. Did a bombardment with a good result – 25.26.27.  
Bombardments with good results.

30<sup>th</sup> Demolition party landed. Blew open wall safes and strong-room (queer numbers).

## **December 1945**

4<sup>th</sup> Mother's birthday. Received our first mail for a fortnight. Two from mother and two from Jean. Cheered me up a lot.

10<sup>th</sup> Ten minutes notice to leave Semarang and proceed to Padang in Sumatra.

12<sup>th</sup> Arrived Emmarhaven 1700hrs. Was surprised to see Tom Addison from Defford was among the 7 RAF personnel there.

13<sup>th</sup> Moved six miles up river to Padang. Lincolnshire Regt ashore in charge. Burning villages and shooting hostages. Leave was given from 1300-1830. Boys came off drunk as lords. Two hoisted inboard by torpedo davit. Two came back 3 hrs adrift by Indonesian dhow.

15<sup>th</sup> Returned to Emmarhaven. Saw Tom Addison. "Carron" came in, met Tom Edmunds. Left harbour 1800hrs.

16<sup>th</sup> Celebrated crossing the line. King Neptune and his court came aboard and did their stuff. Skipper went first and had a rough time of it, all taken in good fun.

17<sup>th</sup> Arrived Kutaradja Island, Sumatra. 0915. Captain acting as SNO conducting surrender of 4,000 Japanese. 20,000 Indonesians are fighting and massing ashore.

18<sup>th</sup> General and 41 of his officers and staff came aboard to surrender their swords and sign the peace treaty. All went off smoothly. It was a very impressive show seeing the Japs bowing and saluting the Ensign.

19<sup>th</sup> Japs evacuating island. Indonesians closing up behind them. Japs fired all buildings and jetty before they left. We shot up harbour installation with pom-pom tracer. Left for Sebang 1600, arrived 1900. Left for Calcutta 2000.

20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> At sea. Getting cooler.

22<sup>nd</sup> Arrived at the mouth of the River Hooghly. Picked up pilot and proceeded to Bug-Bug to take on oil.

23<sup>rd</sup> Went ashore with Joe did shopping centre and had a few drinks.

25<sup>th</sup> Rather a hectic time everyone intoxicated including myself.

26<sup>th</sup> Woke up with a thick head. Just managed to pack gear for 3 days leave at Race Course Rest Camp. Saw race meeting in the afternoon. Pictures in town at night.

27<sup>th</sup> Went sight-seeing all day. Pictures at night. Nice time but it gets very cold at nights.

28<sup>th</sup> Went cycling all the morning. Pictures and shopping at night.

29<sup>th</sup> Returned to ship. Not feeling too cheerful. Everything in a mess.

30<sup>th</sup> New Gun (T) came aboard not much work done. Buzz that Group 50 will out by May 6 is confirmed. Won't be long now.

31<sup>st</sup> Unable to go ashore owing to duties but celebrated New Year's Eve in the cabin with Williams, Hill and S/L Reddick. Saw E.A. in the mess as I had another couple of drinks and a sing-song with him. Finally turned in at 0230hrs.

## January 1946

1<sup>st</sup> Went for final run ashore to meet Joe H and E A. I couldn't find them so I did a bit shopping but didn't have a drink. My opinion of Calcutta is it's a nice city and they have everything mentionable in shops but it's all very dear.

2<sup>nd</sup> Left Calcutta for Singapore at 0730. Rest period over so back to work. Quite a few thick heads this morning.

3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> At sea. Getting hotter.

7<sup>th</sup> Arrived Singapore. Found harbour full up with ships.

8<sup>th</sup> Oiled and then anchored.

9<sup>th</sup> Left Singapore for Naval Base on opposite island to ammunition and store ship. Two Jap cruisers, one battleship and quite a few small ships in the harbour. Went ashore with Joe H to canteen for a couple bottles. Fairly dull time.

10<sup>th</sup> Entered K G V dock to take off supplies. Left Base at 1700 for Semarang "Cavalier" sent away in disgrace from Batavia as the lads went ashore and found a spirit warehouse and got drunk. Started shooting at R Marines and British soldiers. C-in-C (G S 5) signalled "Disgrace to Royal Navy". Sent to sea for 5 days at 3 knots as punishment. We were tied alongside her at the Naval Base.

11<sup>th</sup> At sea. Very rough.

12<sup>th</sup> Arrived Semarang 1500hrs. On arrival the cruisers HMS "Norfolk" and "Jamaica" left. Three transports left in harbour. Situation fairly quiet as evacuation is nearly complete.

13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> In Semarang.

15<sup>th</sup> Left Semarang 1700 for Batavia. Spent the night at sea in a cyclone.

16<sup>th</sup> Arrived Batavia 1030 and anchored. HMS "Norfolk" and "Sussex" in harbour. "Norfolk" left in the evening. Believed destination Calcutta.

17<sup>th</sup> Entered No 3 Basin. Tied alongside Dutch merchant-man "Salawali".

18<sup>th</sup> "Cambrian" came in and tied alongside. We all had a big sing-song on quarter-deck.

19<sup>th</sup> Cambrian left Batavia.

21<sup>st</sup> Moved alongside Dutch troop-ship Johnan De Witt. Went ashore at 1300 with Joe H. Not much good. Prices fantastic. Japanese currency used, Guilder valued 2/4d. An ice-cream costs 10 guilders, a pair of sandals 150. Came back to R N Canteen at night for a drink and went to a concert afterwards.

22<sup>nd</sup> Combined picture-show and concert held aboard. Some of De Witt's passengers came aboard and did a few turns. Not a bad show.

23<sup>rd</sup> Left harbour at 1700 for sea exercises. Very hot weather.

24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> Exercised with "Sussex", "Glasgow", "Petard" and "Cambrian". Night manoeuvres.

26<sup>th</sup> Had to return to harbour owing to defects on instruments. Arrived Batavia 1700, oiled, and tied alongside Dutch destroyer "Kortenaar".

27<sup>th</sup> Divisions and church held aboard. Received 3 letters from Mother dated 16 & 17/12/45 and 3/1/46, also 1 from Jean 17/12/45. Mail situation is getting grim as it turns up any old time.

28<sup>th</sup> Held first practise pull for coming whaler race.

29<sup>th</sup> Played Q.D. at football in afternoon, beat them 4-0. Pitch practically under water.

30<sup>th</sup> Went alongside Dutch RAPWI (Repatriation of Allied Prisoners and War Internees) "Indapoera". Film show at night and a concert in her lounge afterwards owing to bad weather.

## **February 1946**

1<sup>st</sup> "Indapoera" left Batavia. We tied alongside Ettricbank.

3<sup>rd</sup> Went ashore with Joe to the canteen, came back early as we soon drank our weeks beer-ration.

5<sup>th</sup> Went as patrol at the "La Conga" Batavia. Nothing exciting happened.

6<sup>th</sup> Left Batavia at short notice for Makassar, Celebes Islands, 1100hrs. On leaving harbour we met Cambrian going in with General Dempsey aboard.

8<sup>th</sup> Arrived Makassar 1400. Looks dead.

9<sup>th</sup> IT IS DEAD.

10<sup>th</sup> Went ashore to see ship's concert "Caprician Capers". A very good show.

12<sup>th</sup> Left Makassar 1200 hrs for Semarang.

13<sup>th</sup> Arrived Semarang 0700hrs. Very rough. Left Batavia 1600.

14<sup>th</sup> Arrived Batavia 0930.

15<sup>th</sup> Left Batavia 1300 for Singapore. Escorting two LCIs at 8 knots. A number of Army and Navy ratings taking passage.

16<sup>th</sup> Practise close range weapons shoot in forenoon. Round in barrel overlooked, exploded in afternoon injuring 6 ratings, 1 seriously.

17<sup>th</sup> Arrived Singapore 1000hrs. Divisions and Capt "D's" visit. Bad feeling amongst the boys. Moved round to Naval Base 1600 arrived 1800.

18<sup>th</sup> Stored ship.

19<sup>th</sup> Left for Penang 1030. As we were leaving we were ordered to proceed at full speed to the aid of a sinking ship off the North coast of Borneo.

At 1600 we turned round as aircraft could find no sign of any ship or wreckage. Proceeded to Penang.

21<sup>st</sup> Arrived Penang 0930. Still plenty of rackets working.

22<sup>nd</sup> Raced in semi-final of whalers boat-race. Lost to officers crew by ½ length.

24<sup>th</sup> Divisions and church held. Captain squashed buzz about going home shortly.

25<sup>th</sup> Left at 0700 for Trincomalee.

26 & 27 At sea.

28 Arrived Trinco. 1330. Went ashore with Joe H in the evening for “big-eats” and a drink. After four months of starvation on here I was rather hungry. Received all our back mail, 8 letters from Jean and 9 from Mother

### **March 1946**

1<sup>st</sup> Moved into 7 Mess.

2<sup>nd</sup> Went ashore to play FX at football, won 4-0. Stayed ashore afterwards for supper and a couple of drinks.

3<sup>rd</sup> Moved alongside depot ship “Woolwich”. Went sick with sunstroke and dysentery, felt pretty grim.

5<sup>th</sup> Started work again but still feeling groggy.

17<sup>th</sup> Left Woolwich intending to go to sea but had to return owing to vap. (evaporator) trouble. Picked up draft.

18<sup>th</sup> Left at 0700 for Cochin, India at 1600 the captain broadcast to the ship’s company saying that a message had just been received from C-in-C reading “Cambrian and Caprice leave for England at the end of March” much cheering.

19<sup>th</sup> Arrived Cochin 1730. Staying over night.

20<sup>th</sup> Left Cochin for Bombay at 1500.

22<sup>nd</sup> Arrived Bombay 0900. Received signal stating we were to be in Trinco 14 April, not so good.

24<sup>th</sup> Divisions held. Party in Wardroom afterwards celebrating 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary . Went ashore in the afternoon, quite a nice time.

25<sup>th</sup> Went ashore again. New signal states Trinco by 1<sup>st</sup> April.

28<sup>th</sup> Left Bombay with “Cambrian” for Trinco 1800. Expecting to stay there a couple of days before starting for Home.

### **April 1946**

1<sup>st</sup> Arrive Trinco 0800. Captain and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. Went ashore to get all the buzzes. Result, all up to 58 ArSG going home on Thursday. Caesar, Cavendish, Carysfort, Carron and Cambrian in here.

3<sup>rd</sup> Tom Edmunds came aboard and we had quite a nice evening. Big farewell party on board for officers. Draft left the ship, quite a knock after being with them for so long. Sailing cancelled until am Friday. ETA Portsmouth 10.30am 2<sup>nd</sup> May. Roll on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

4<sup>th</sup> Flew paying-off pennant at 0800. Proceeded to oiling jetty 1330.

5<sup>th</sup> Left Trinco for Aden 1000 on the first lap of our journey home.

6<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> At sea,

12<sup>th</sup> Arrived Aden 0800.

13<sup>th</sup> Left Aden 0500 for Port Said. 15<sup>th</sup> Took rating on board from Cambrian suffering from pneumonia and proceeded full speed to Port Sudan.

16<sup>th</sup> Arrived P Sudan 0530 discharged sick rating. Left immediately for Port Suez.

17<sup>th</sup> Arrived P Suez 0500. Proceeded through Suez Canal arriving at P Said 1830.



18<sup>th</sup> Went ashore with Nobby and Brum had quite a nice time.

20<sup>th</sup> Left Port Said 0530 for Gibraltar.

25<sup>th</sup> Arrived at Gibraltar 1430. Oiled and then tied alongside Cambrian at South Wall.  
Cassandra still in here.

26<sup>th</sup> Went ashore for afternoon had a very nice time.

28<sup>th</sup> Left Gib for Portsmouth 2000

### **May 1946**

2<sup>nd</sup> Arrived Pompey 1030 and there ends my eastern cruise.