

EX HMNZS ENDEAVOUR - LAST VOYAGE

Endeavour is now about 100nm off the west coast of India, approaching Mumbai which is about 400nm from Bhavnagar which is her final destination. The Alang ship-breaking yard at Bhavnagar is the largest in the world with an average of 350 ships arriving to be recycled or scrapped each year.



DID YOU KNOW?

On 17 April 1956 HMNZS *Royalist* commissioned at Devonport, Plymouth, after a modernisation refit paid for by New Zealand, which cost £3,345,000. The Admiralty, in an act of unbridled duplicity, had instructed Commodore Madden, the incoming Chief of Naval Staff in 1953, to convince the New Zealand Government to take *Royalist*, while serving New Zealanders in the RNZN wanted frigates.

The crew largely came from *Bellona*, which had paid off in early 1953. The captain's cabin on board *Royalist* had not been completed, and Captain Phipps remained living in *Bellona*, which was secured alongside, for the next week. The formal handing over of the ship took place on 9 July, after trials and inspections had been completed, but only after Phipps twice refused to sign the refit completion form because of uncompleted work.



HMNZS Royalist - Vancouver 1962

A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 25

The trains were a great way to travel, they were fairly frequent and of course you got to see the countryside. As in most cities the train tends to expose some of the more unsavoury areas or back sections but never the less gives you a better idea of the city inhabitants than sometimes you get from only traveling by road.

We arrived in Colchester around lunchtime on a Sunday. We were billeted in the Sherbourne Hotel for the length of the course. The Manager was most apologetic, as I had to be accommodated in one of the attic rooms but advised I could shift on the Monday when another room became vacant. As it turned out I was happy with the cosy little room I had so remained in the attic room for the duration of our stay.

The hotel was one of the very old buildings in UK, however it was very homily, with a nice dining room, lounge downstairs and a small very cosy bar, which of course we made fairly frequent use of. The rooms upstairs all used communal bathrooms, toilets and opened off a large hall at the top of the stairs. Whilst these amenities were unusual for most tourists, it wasn't a big deal having just spent five plus years at sea using communal facilities.

As it was just after lunch we decided to go for a familiarisation tour. Just across the road was another hotel, which looked more like a drinking establishment than our surrounds so we decided to call in and have a cold one, or a cool one if you know how the Poms drink their beer.

We were only in there less than half an hour when a fight broke out. We sat back and watched the entertainment. Colchester was the post that the troops were dispatched from and returned to from Northern Ireland tours of duty, so they tended to make up for

their lack of freedom especially on their return and tended to over indulge which of course led to the settling of petty scores.

After that fracas we wandered off and walked the streets. We discovered that the Colchester Castle Museum was open so spent an hour or more visiting that and learning a bit about the local history. It was a very interesting visit. We also visited another pub called "The Hole In the Wall". This was a very small bar actually built in the original Roman Wall. That too was interesting and it is just amazing to visit some of these places that are hundreds of years old or more. NZ with its recent history pales into insignificance when you look at the dates of some of these buildings.

By now of course we were into the beginning of November. It was starting to get quite cold, however the locals advised us it didn't snow there until around Xmas. Yeah right, by the second week we were going to work (School) in the dark at 7-45am and coming home in the dark about 5pm. Also by the second week we walked out one morning to discover it had been snowing overnight. I guess the weather forecasters in Colchester are a bit like the ones in NZ, they occasionally get the story right.

The course started at 8am on the Monday. We had all the usual introductions and then the next four weeks were a combination of class work and then hands on maintenance procedures. We were there to discover the magic of Paxman Ventura engines. These were the propulsion engines on the Lake Class Patrol Boats and also the generating sets on the Y160 Leander's (CANTERBURY & later WELLINGTON).

As Bulkhead had already had time on a Patrol Boat he was ahead of me in hands on knowledge, however I think the advantage I had was I went there knowing next to nothing and therefore gained a huge amount of both knowledge and experience especially with the hands on maintenance tasks undertaken. I found it hugely interesting and thoroughly enjoyed the time. The school was attached to the main Paxman Works or called the Britannia Works. They were in the process of shifting to a new site and this was interesting as the Britannia Works was centred on the original workshops, which still had dirt floors. When we went to Germany later and saw their modern workshops etc. it was hard to work out who had won the Second World War, as you will see in a future episode.

There were two classrooms in the building at Paxmans. Bulkhead and I were in one with a workshop next door which contained the Ventura engine, which the maintenance activities were carried out on. The other classroom had a class from one of the Middle East countries. Their instructor often would come in and join in our discussions around maintenance and different experiences; this was because he never knew how many trainees he would have on any one day. Sometimes they would all turn up and other times only a few. A couple of the obviously well to do ones hardly ever turned up and it just seemed to be a jolly away from home, so I think he was so frustrated that he could never run a proper curriculum so would come in to our class to try and get some stability in his teaching life.

Both of the Instructors were very good, they had a huge range of knowledge and were very good at imparting their knowledge and tips. As part of the course we went down to the new factory for a couple of days to cover the governor aspects of the engine. As part of the experience we were required to strip down a RE400 governor. The instructor for this was a real hard case and it was a hugely enjoyable couple of days.

The governor over view was quite intensive and then we went into the strip down rebuild phase. Bulkhead and I of course having done machinery rebuilds before were very careful to lay the parts out in trays in an order where we knew when we went to put it back together all the relevant section parts were together. There were a myriad of springs.

The next morning we arrived to start the rebuild and were met by the Instructor with a big grin on his face and the immortal words "I have continually told the cleaning Lady not to clean the bench top" and then we spied our neatly arranged trays of parts had all been tipped together, talk about a jigsaw. I suspect that the Instructor got great delight in shuffling the trays to see how good we were.

However we managed to get the right parts into the right section of the governor but it did take time. The best part of this governor training was to put the governor on the test bed and set it to work. It was really interesting to see what major effect small adjustments made to the governor performance. I guess the biggest lesson we learnt from this experience was if it isn't broken don't touch it, and was easy to see why most adjustments in the in service governors are wired as set or plugged.

We decided that one of the weekends we would go to France or more specifically Paris. The school had no problem with us leaving on a Friday so we had a three-day weekend in Paris towards the end of November.

We caught a train down to London and then changed trains for Dover. When we got to Dover we found because of the weather all cross channel sailings were now from Folkstone, so we were transferred to there. The crossing was reminiscent of many Cook Strait crossings, up and down and sideways. Not a pleasant few hours and we were glad to get to Calais.

Then it was a fast train to Paris and another world. I guess the first thing that struck me was the green copper coloured rooves. We had only a short time to get around, as it was late afternoon by the time we had arrived so we managed to get in the Eiffel Tower before the night took over. Because of the weather we could only go up to the first viewing deck. Like most people I guess is the realisation that postcards or photos do not do justice to the sheer size of this structure. It is not until you stand underneath it and see the size of the support structure and the view even from the first viewing platform is really amazing and gives some idea of the size and picturesque splendour of central Paris.

The next day we took a river cruise on the Seine, one of the notable things is how low the bridges are. This is a serene way to travel through the central Paris area and there are a lot of notable buildings pointed out. We tramped the Champs Elysees and Arc de Triomphe, a bus tour including Notre-Dame and another day was done. On the Sunday it was off to Gard du Nord and a train back to Calais and luckily a smoother ride across the ditch.

The time in Colchester rapidly came to a close. It had been a really valuable learning curve and enjoyable lunches at the Red Lion Hotel with the two Paxman Instructors. A lot of knowledge was imparted and lessons learned with even more tall tales told especially in the evenings. It was time to return to London and another chapter in our OE.

To be continued



Hole In The Wall - Colchester



Red Lion Hotel - Colchester

Take care

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"There are good ships, and there are wood ships, the ships that sail the sea."

"But the best ships are friendships, and may they always be."

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