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This book is, of course
dedicated to Rose

Foreword

As a small boy in the 1950's I would often play with the things that my father had brought home from his time in the Royal Navy. I had no idea where they came from, nor of any significance they might have had, only that they were interesting to play with and look at. Old books of photos of Chinese junks, rickshaws, burning ships, snow scenes and men in sailors uniforms. A model Chinese junk on top of the T.V. Huge amounts of foreign coins and bank notes. Lots of clothes including a sailors peaked cap, Chinese dressing gown and a pair of tiny slippers. Among these things were, what to a small boy seemed like some boring looking old exercise books, note books and scraps of paper, written mostly in thin pencil and difficult to read. These were the diaries that my father kept all through his navy career, sometimes written hastily during a lull in the action. Some of the family had tried to read the originals a few times and although they seemed interesting they were hard to read and the contents often muddled up.

After my dad retired from post office telecommunications in 1981, he decided to re-type out the diaries. I think at the time there was a German T.V series (The Boat) which covered a similar time and area, which may have given him the idea. These type written pages, together with a selection of photos now made sense and proved to be very interesting to those who read them. I think he even thought to get them published but ill health and fear of losing the one manuscript stopped him from trying.

Sadly he died on 21st June 1990. He rarely spoke of his time in the navy, so a lot of stories went with him. Like the story of the 64 piece china tea set which travelled from China to Yorkshire unscathed but arrived from Yorkshire to London in 1,000 pieces! Or when I once asked him what he used to do when he was not on duty aboard ship and he said "nothing, absolutely nothing".

I felt that these records of events must be of some interest to others and that they deserve to be made into something more permanent than a folder of loose pages. For that reason I had the idea of trying to make a book of the diaries, making use of computer technology and at the same time learning how to use it. This is the result of that effort.

Ron Greenwood

Memories of youth.

My Father, Fred Green. From a Yorkshire coal mining family, who started work 'down the mine' at the age of 11. Came from a devout Christian family. Joined the police force, married in 1914 and spent the whole of the great war as a gunner in the Royal Artillery.

My Mother, Edith Annie Keightly, from Knavesmire, York. Also from a devout Christian family whose father was head gardener to a gentlemans estate (later branching out as a landscape gardener). A pillar of the York co-operative society. He and Grannie Keightly were very strict, had 6 children 2 of whom strayed from the straight and narrow and were banished forever.

Edith entered gentlemans service straight from school and there met policeman Fred. They were married in April 1914. Fred was aged 24 and Edith 28.

Mother spent the war years 1914-18 at her mothers home in York where their first child Donald was born and died aged 1 month. Where my elder sister Marjorie was born and where I was born, Cyril Jeffrey Green, 2nd November 1918, 11 days before the end of world war one. Two more children were born to them later, Eric, 2 years younger than me and Betty five years younger, A Downes syndrome child.

Fred not keen on the strict discipline of the police after his army service returned to coal mining after demob.

We moved home to Fitzwilliam into a coal company house. My only memories of which were my sister and I walking daily on our own about a mile to school and back.

My sister Marjorie suffered a fatal scalding accident when a pan of boiling water on the the hob was knocked over her - aged 6 years.

My father had to leave coal mining because of an eye disorder common to miners (unable to see in the dark). We moved to a council estate on the other side of Fitzwilliam but attended the same infants school. My only memories here were of striking miners and families lining the streets jeering at blacklegs walking to the pit during the 1926 general strike and of the soup kitchens.

Father unable to find work in a village where the only industry was mining moved to High Ackworth a few miles away as steward of a working mens club. Memories here are of once being given a comic to read. The huge glass roofed scullery with a massive brick built coal fired copper. The home of a cousin of my dads which was quite near, where the cousin used to regularly come home paralytic drunk and collapse on the sofa. Also of his daughter (normally away from home working in the cotton mills) playing a horned gramophone, the first I had ever seen.

With not enough custom in a tiny village in those hard times the club closed down. We moved on a little way down the street and dad opened a fish and chip shop.

Young brother Eric and I would walk 3 miles up a big hill to school, sometimes we went through the fields often taking a drink of fresh milk straight from the cow on the way and as always unaccompanied by parents. On return from school we had to turn the handle of the massive (to us) potato peeling machine for hours on end.

Business failed again, I think for the same reason (although the doctor warned us not to eat so much fish and chips, they were doing us no good - perhaps we were eating all the profits!) The only highlights I can remember here are of someone owing dad something

Fred and Edith Green



Cyril with younger brother Eric



and paying for it with 2 white rabbits which Eric and I kept in the large empty attic.

We moved again, to a council estate, 13 Hamel Rise, Hemsworth a couple of miles away. A 'modern home' with gas lighting and a bathroom! Sparsely furnished with the dining and bedroom suite our parent bought on marrying and wool clipping rugs on the lounge floor. This was the only furniture my parents ever truly possessed (other than a lounge suite I got them with an allowance to them during the war) and was only disposed of after their deaths in 1979. Memories are of school just down the road. The school garden allotment where I was so proud of the produce I grew and the many fights which I always seemed to win. Except one which greatly disturbed me 'cos he was shorter than me. Billy Bentham was built like a barrel, short and wide, I was a skinny beanpole. We played endlessly in the street, under the lamppost at night in all weather and all seasons. Eric and I had to escort Betty every day, twice a day to special classes at another school before going on to our own schools throughout our school life.

Father at this time was endeavouring to make a living as an insurance agent against all odds (who wanted insurance when the mines were on short time etc). Finally having to abandon it and without income times were hard. Little to eat and no form of recreation (I had never seen a radio other than one made by my uncle Herbert who was an electrical engineer). I have vivid memories of the time my dad was in the workhouse alongside our estate and of going to the bottom of my friend Dave Hart's garden to say hello to him.

Of having failed to post my fathers pools coupon on time locally and having to ride his outsize old bike the 8 miles to Pontefract to catch the last post. Of being caught red handed with my fingers in the biscuit tins at the back of the 'Maypole grocers shop' (he'd got a mirror rigged up showing on the biscuit tins). The manager was a friend of dads and being an 'ex-cop' was known down at the station. They laid on a scare for me - I was never tempted to pilfer again. Those biscuits did taste good though (it was the only way I got any).

I remember regularly going twice on Sundays to ring the bells and pump the bellows of the organ. Of long walks after church with my parents through the local fields and down the 'lovers lane' where all the young hopefuls paraded. Of walking (all the family) to visit my Grannie Green, an 8 mile trip each way and being given a half crown (which I could never keep) from a purse kept beneath her many voluminous skirts, the most I ever got and not regularly was 1d a week pocket money.

On leaving school at 14, I used to ride my dads old oversize bike with a cheap carrier on the front to hawk yeast (for baking bread) round the local villages - not successfully as it used to dry up packed in paper bags and there was opposition from an older well established rival, but as dad got it trade price from a mate etc, I ended up having to travel further and further to sell less and less.

I eventually got a job at the local newsagent (3/- a week) delivering papers the whole length of a long straggling village on foot early mornings. Spending the late morning in a sympathetic cobblers shop with the other paper boys. Selling the midday racing paper in the streets and delivering the evening papers every night, with 'the Pinkun' (racing and football results) being hawked in the street on Saturdays. We were not even allowed time off on half-day closing days, having then to work in the newsagents home garden!

Finally I succeeded in getting a proper job with Frank Partridge 'Painter and Decorator' of South Kirkby, who used to have contracts to paint the local council estates, It mattered little that most of the time was spent mixing his special 'slush' or up on the roof cleaning and painting gutters - I was happy doing it! - a proper job. Alas business slackened and he had to lay off - guess who? Cyril Green, the last to be employed.

Times were no better at home, no money. We couldn't even pay the rent on the council house and had to move to a centuries old cottage on a farm, with stone flag floors, terrible damp, no gas or electric, cooking on the kitchen coal range. The only water supply, a single tap at the sink which failed to work whenever a cow in the farmyard was taking a drink. The loo and cesspit were in the garden where the wooden platform seat had two holes in it!

There was now frequent friction with my father and I finally burst, cycled to Pontefract on the old bike to join the army, but though the recruiting officer was full of sympathy they were not recruiting anyone. So I rode on to Leeds and succeeded in being accepted into the Royal Navy.

JOINED THE NAVY 27th MARCH 1935.

Entered H.M.S Ganges boys training establishment, Shotley, Ipswich. - I think the model on which all Borstals were based, to me a pleasant relief but on reflection a very tough introduction to navy life. Allowed home for normal school holidays, at no other times allowed outside the premises except Sunday afternoons when we could walk the length of a country lane for two hours only.

Every morning spent at instructions or drill. Every afternoon, whatever the season, come rain or shine, out in the open in shorts, vest and so'westers (if raining) either at sport or recreation.

Mess huts were divided into a concrete square with trestles for eating on only and a polished wooden floor for the remainder with our rows of beds on it which we were only allowed on in the evenings. A wash house with toilet and basins with cold water only. Baths and dhobeying (clothes washing) being done at 6.30am in a different building, or rather showers not baths, we never had baths in the navy!

No forms of entertainment or radio but never having had any I didn't miss it. There was always plenty of life and activity. I did seem to spend a lot of time behind the swimming baths - fighting!

I am thankful that I didn't smoke - punishment for any misdemeanor was 'jankers', doubling around the parade ground with an imitation rifle held above the head. Many times a friend of mine whose only crime had been to get caught smoking in the heads (toilet), had come off jankers unable to lower his arms again for some considerable time.

I was paid 4s 9d as a boy 1st class, just enough to buy a little something in the tuck shop and a couple of stamps!

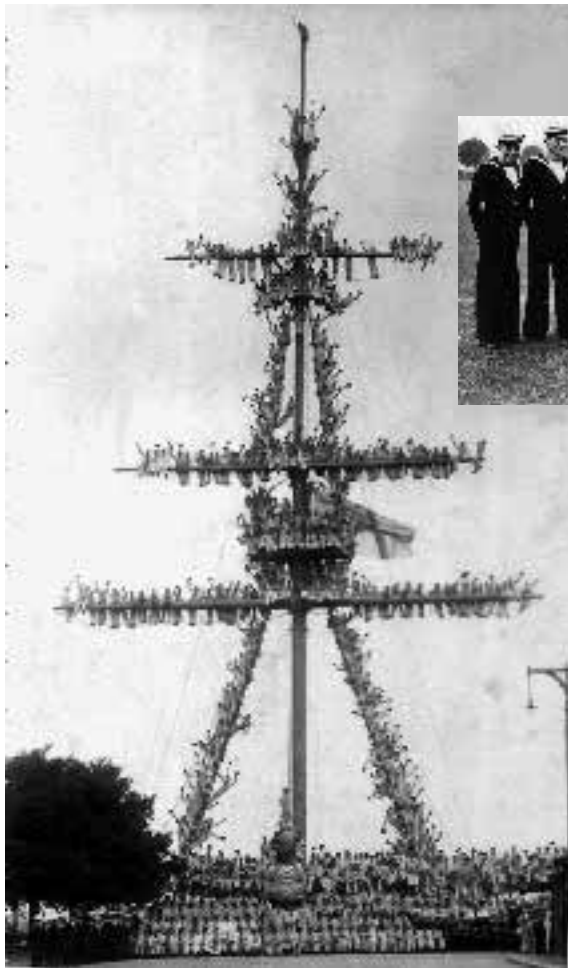
I was selected for training as a wireless operator, finished training on 2nd July 1936 and joined H.M.S Cumberland as a boy telegraphist 29th July 1936.

In the navy all Green's are called Jimmy. I was no exception - so NOT Cyril Jeffrey but Jimmy Green started his navy career.



H.M.S Ganges
Kit Inspection
and wireless
telegraphy training





H.M.S Ganges



This is a copy, exact in every detail, of the diaries kept during my naval service 1936 to 1948. No reproduction in any form of any of the subject matter or photographs must be made without written permission.

H.M.S Cumberland.

China station July 1936 to November 1938

including Chinese Japanese war 1937/8

South American Squadron - South Atlantic Squadron -
February 1939 - September 1941

including Battle of the River Plate - December 13th 1939
Mutiny on the Queen Mary - November 24th 1940
Dakar incident - September 14th 1940
(Vichy French v Free French, with active support by British Navy)

H.M.S. Speedwell.

Lofoten Raids - November 1941
Stay in Russia - January 8th 1942 to 10th April 1942
Invasion of North Africa - November 1942 to June 1943
Second session in North Russia - December 1943 to February 1944
Invasion of France - June 5th 1944
Invasion of Scheldt Estuary - August 1944 to March 1945
and minesweeping operations

H.M.S Musketeer.

October 1945 to 31st March 1946

Nore Wireless Station.

Admiralty House, Chatham 29th May 1946 to January 1949

Joined H.M.S Cumberland, a county class cruiser of 10,000 tons 29th July 1936.

September 3rd

When leaving the dockyard prior to setting out for China, hit the side of the lock. Was delayed for two days.

September 5th 1936

Sailed for Gibraltar and the Far East. Rough passage through Bay of Biscay, (was seasick). Stayed Gibraltar two days. Went over the rock twice.

11th September

Sailed for Malta. Started tropical routine in the Med. Passed through Suez canal calling at Port Said, (September 18th-20th).

September 21st-24th

In Red Sea. Very very hot.

September 24th

Arrived Aden. Then onto Arabian Sea (25th-26th) and Indian Ocean (27th-1st October).

1st October

Arrived at Columbo. Stayed one week to paint ship. On to Singapore 10th October. Stayed three days. Then to Hong Kong.

19th October.

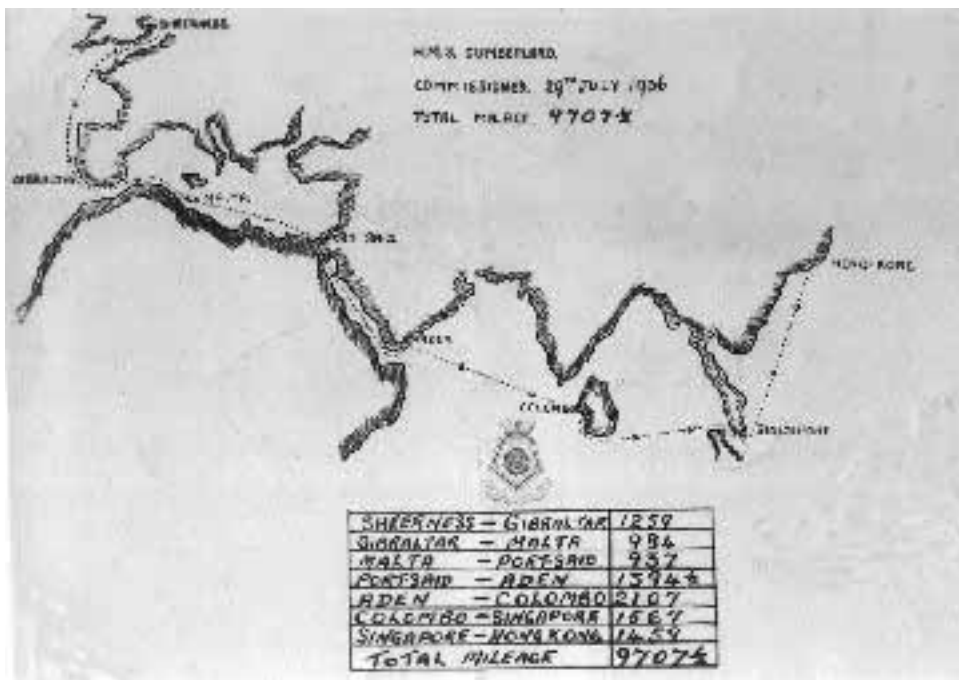
Arrived Hong Kong. Stayed until sailing for Southern Cruise en-route for Manilla (Phillipine Islands) 12th January 1937.

January 13th

Started training classes (Gunnery)

15th January - 1st February

Visited Manilla. Jesselton and Labuan (North Borneo). Engaged in mock warfare before returning to Singapore (saw a waterspout on 2nd February).





Christmas 1936 H.M.S Cumberland.

Each table is a “Mess”.


i.e. complete home (including sleeping in hammocks slung from above), for a particular group of ship’s company - I was in one mess wireless department.

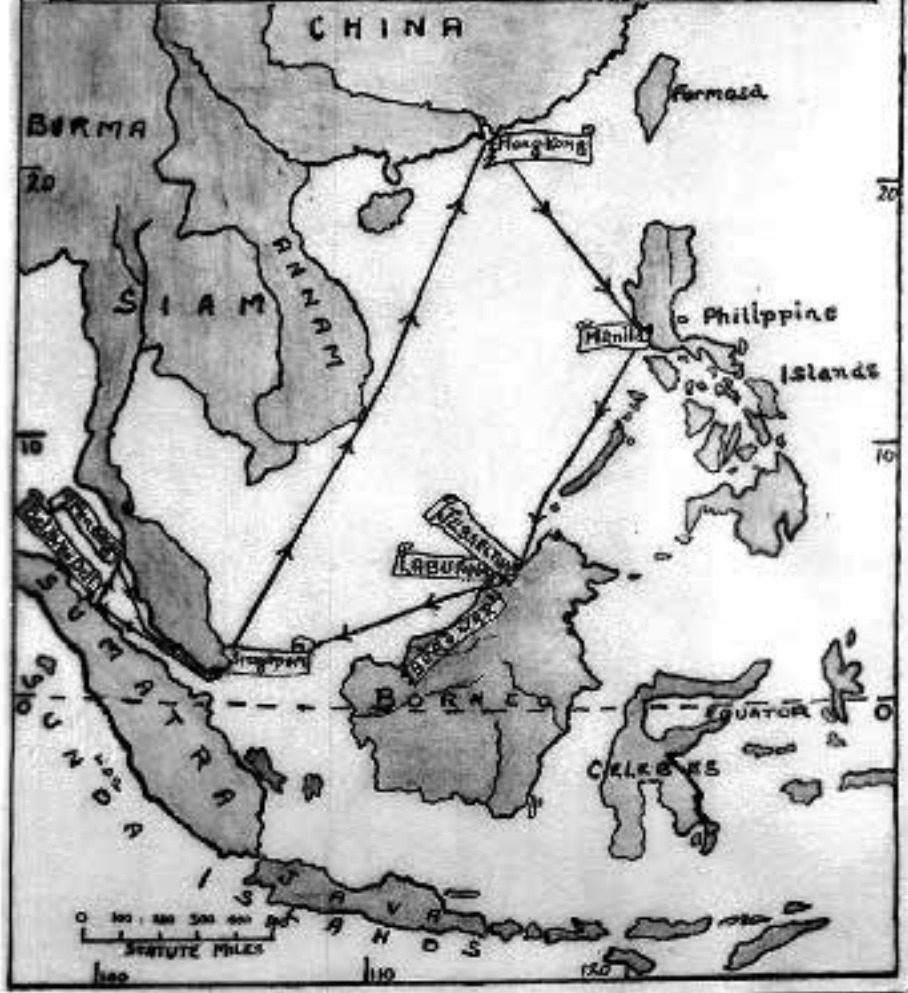




Ship's Walrus Seaplane
Launched by catapult.
Recovered by crane.
Most spectacular in inclement
weather!



HMS CUMBERLAND		
SOUTHERN CRUISE - 1937		
HONG KONG	— MANILA	630 MILES
MANILA	— JESSELTON	539 "
JESSELTON	— LABUAN	79 "
LABUAN	— SINGAPORE	748 "
SINGAPORE	— BELAWAN DELI	296 "
BELAWAN DELI	— PENANG	145 "
PENANG	— SINGAPORE	388 "
SINGAPORE	— HONG KONG	1459 "
		TOTAL 4,284 MILES





Views of Hong Kong



Hong Kong End



Harbour Ferry - Kowloon

4th February

At Singapore, proceeded up river to Jahore (the Naval base at Singapore).

February 16th

Did various exercises, picked up aircraft then sailed for Belawan Deli.(Sumatra)

17th February

Arrived Belawan Deli at 0600. Went ashore to Medan, to a dinner and smoking concert provided by the British community. Oh-boy! what a do! Lavish entertainment until 24th February.

25th February - 1st March

Visited Penang (Small Island off Malaya) and did exercises with aircraft.

3rd - 10th March

Returned to Singapore and into dry dock.

15th March

Returned to Hong Kong doing mock war exercises on the way. (I was personally involved in a mock invasion of Hong Kong 21-22nd March). Remained at Hong Kong until 20th April.

6th May 1937

Sailed on Northern Cruise visiting Amoy (famous for it's 'rolling rock' & 'Camel rock'), Putu, Woosung and arrived at Shanghai.

12th May 1937

Whilst at Shanghai, on coronation day, went to a tattoo on Shanghai racecourse. There were Chinese rioting in Nanking road. 'Making free' with Chinese women in the crowds and trying to get onto the racecourse. About 5 -6,000 police and firemen on duty.

17-30th May

Visited Hankow and arrived at Wei-hai-wei island, the fleet summer base 3rd June 1937.

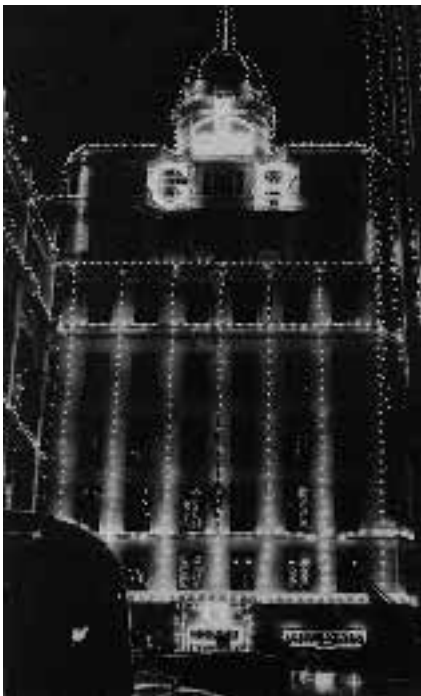


Top Left
Kings Building Hong Kong

Top Right
Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank
Building

Bottom Left
Queens Building

Illuminated for the Coronation of King
George VI. May 12th 1937



July 14th 1937

Trouble has broken out between Chinese and Japanese troops, been fighting for about a fortnight and is getting serious now.

3rd August

We left Wei-Hai-Wei for Tsingtao together with H.M Ships *Eagle*, *Dainty*, *Diana* and U.S.S *Augusta*. Lots of subs and tenders in the harbour when we arrived also two Japanese cruisers and lots of armed trawlers. Expect fighting here, all liberty men made familiar with general recall.

A typhoon raged August 4th to 6th whilst we were in harbour. Ditty boxes, cups & saucers thrown from mess shelves during the night. Passed armed Japanese trawlers making bad going (invisible beneath waves at times).

August 7th

Weather calm now. Typhoon hit Shanghai killing 2 and injuring 61. Expected to hit Nanking tomorrow.

August 9th

North China fighting has subsided but is expected to break out again with added vigour during next week. Cleared lower deck August 10th and warned against having anything to do with Japs ashore, they are touchy and dangerous.

We raised steam with all dispatch on Thursday 12th August. All liberty men recalled. H.M.S *Falmouth* (Commander in Chief's yacht) had two sparkers and an S.P.O adrift so borrowed two from us. (Scott & Buchanan) We sailed for Woosung flats at 25 knots.

BATTLE OF WOOSUNG FLATS

A few days ago a Japanese officer and sailor were killed in Shanghai. Yesterday 12th August, 21 Japanese warships in the Whangpu River, off Shanghai landed 2,000 blue jackets and had already got 10,000 troops in Shanghai.

We (*Cumberland*) together with *Danae* and *Duncan* are preparing to land platoons to help protect the international settlement. The Yangtse River has been blockaded and about twenty steamers, three customs vessels, a 'Yankee' gunboat, H.M.S *Capetown* and the whole of our Yangtse gunboats are blocked in the river. The Whangpu river between Shanghai and Woosung is not yet mined or blocked.

Three Steamers sunk, forty large junks captured and mined by Chinese soldiers. Fighting in Szecheun Road. North and other places.

Saturday 14th August

All Britons and Americans advised to evacuate into the international settlement.

We, *Cumberland* (C in C Far East Flagship) together with *Suffolk* arrived at Woosung. It is expected that the C in C Admiral Sir Charles Little will change over to the *Falmouth* and proceed up the Whangpu to Shanghai.

We had to sail right up to rescue *Falmouth* who was under heavy fire and being used as a shield. When we got there three Jap cruisers and seven Jap destroyers were shelling Woosung town and the A.P.C oil works at Shanghai were on fire, lighting up all the sky. Then a squadron of Chinese planes came over bombing the Japs and a Japanese merchant ship about 200 yards from us which later turned out to be an ammo ship and the Chinks tried to bomb that. (thank Christ they missed it or there'd not be much left of us now). As it was two bombs just skimmed us and gave us a scare, so we 'upped hook' after transferring the C in C and four platoons of seamen and marines to *Falmouth*.

Four Japanese destroyers let *Falmouth* get well up river (on way to Shanghai) then followed using her as a shield to shell Woosung Flats. Lots of steamers beating it as fast as they can down river. We are now anchored with them further down the river. We are next to a big Jap steamer. As we went down the river we passed the big Jap ammo ship moving up again with three Jap cruisers moving in darkened ship on the other side of us. H.M.S *Suffolk* and U.S.S *Augusta* are lying off the river and the destroyer *Duncan* has gone down to collect four platoons of seamen and marines for the *Suffolk*. She calls alongside us on her return for two howitzers and crews from us. I've just heard that we are sending two more platoons, making nearly 400 of our crew deficient and barely enough to run the ship.

No big ships can get up to Shanghai as the Chinks have sunk steamers in the river to prevent any more Japs getting up. H.M.S *Danae* can't get down and we can't get up and the *Capetown's* trapped at Nanking and is making preparations to sweep down the river.

In Shanghai itself the fighting is fierce and Chinese planes had a go at bombing a Japanese warship in the river but made a bloomer and the bombs landed in the British settlement, just missing the Cathy hotel on the Bund killing 150. We don't know if any British are amongst them.

We only know the situation here as we are unable to get any press news owing to our own continuous transmissions, but a stoker has a wireless rigged on the fo'csl and every night we get the Shanghai programmes, interrupted continuously to send messages to people all over China saying that people are safe etc. The press news is broadcast at 9pm daily but gets continuous jamming.

Our troopship '*Moran*' on the way from Hong Kong to Shanghai with a regiment of Royal Welsh Fusiliers has not been heard of for some time. We are anxious as the weather is very rough and a typhoon is around.

Sunday 15th August

We are lying at anchor in the vicinity of the middle ground buoy and I've just noticed two sets of masts sticking high out of the water just astern of us. They must be the



The British Bund
Shanghai 1937



Cumberland
anchored at British
Navel buoy
Shanghai. October
1937

Thursday 20th October

Sailed from Ismalia through remainder of the canal and stopped at Port Said for only a few hours then on.

It's an old saying that the Mediterranean never gets rough but it's rough enough now, too uncomfortable for me!

Sunday 23rd October

Arrived Malta had a marvellous run ashore and we sailed for Gibraltar Tuesday 25th.

Friday 28th

Arrived Gibraltar and sailed again for Spithead

Monday 31st October

Arrived in the English channel. The Bay of Biscay behaved perfectly for us and we arrived at Sheerness on my birthday 2nd November 1938.

We arrived at our base of Chatham Friday 4th November, flying the paying off pendant.

Thursday 10th November

Day of days. Rolling home again and Oh! for the life of a civvy for two months.