

***Sydney Flemming.***  
***1919-2001***



July, 1941. AB. QR3. Age 22  
HMS Scout, Hong Kong, China.

***RN 1937-1946***  
***Korea 1951-2***

I once looked out from the Tamar Bridge at the warships down below.  
Ships of the Royal Navy, with names I do not know.  
As I stood and gazed at them on the water down below,  
I saw a fleet of phantom ships and men of long ago.

The *RODNEY* and the *NELSON*, the *VALIANT*, *RAMILLIES*,  
*REPULULSE*, *RENOWN* and *MALAY*, coming from foreign seas.  
I saw *REVENGE* and *WARSPITE*, ill-fated *ROYAL OAK*,  
So many ships, their names made faint by shell and fire and smoke.

And some I saw to harbour come, as though through glasses dark,  
The *BARHAM* and the *GLORIOUS*, *EAGLE* and the *ARK*.  
And then came the greatest, the mighty warship *HOOD*,  
Dark and grey and wraithlike, from the spot on which I stood.

From the cruel North Atlantic, from the Med and Java Sea,  
The big ships and the little ships returned for me to see.  
There's the *GLOWWORM* and *HARDING*, the *DEVONSHIRE* and *KENT*,  
The *COSSACK* and *COURAGEOUS*, the *SUFFOLK* and *ARDENT*.

But mercifully hidden are the men and stilled their cries;  
Now I can't see very clearly, must be the smoke that's in my eyes.  
You won't know Shorty Hasset, he won the DSM.  
He still fought on when *EXETER* was burning stern to stem.

Where now Dodger Long and Lofty, where now the boys and men?  
They are lost forever; will we see their like again?  
I thought I saw them mustering on deck for Daily Prayer,  
And heard 'For those in peril' rise on the evening air.

Then darker grew the picture as the lowering night came on.  
I looked down from that lofty bridge, but all those ships had gone.  
Those mighty ships had vanished, gone those simple men.  
We'll surely never ever see the like of them again.

Written for myself because I wanted to understand and because I was interested and also served. He did not speak of his service and would only communicate odd episodes at the end of his life

Afterwards it seemed to be of some interest to  
Ian, David and Tony the youngest who had the Lion heart  
And perhaps to anyone in future generations.

Also with gratitude for sharing many experiences of his life to:

**Christopher Briggs, RNR, MBE;**



Lieutenant Christopher Briggs, RNR 1<sup>st</sup> Lt HMS Scout.

I have been unbelievably fortunate in finding, and being able to communicate with **Christopher Briggs, RNR, MBE;** He was HMS Scouts Executive Officer for her Hong Kong commission. Fate rarely leads to such an encounter particularly when the events described took place sixty year ago. Christopher despite the passing of time describes the events with great accuracy. He was at the time of writing (2002) living in Australia aged 95yrs. It has been an inspiration to hear and read his story and also that of his late wife, Alice (Sis) Briggs. Both his wife and daughter, Patricia survived their ordeal at the hands of their Japanese captives.

Their story is inspiring in which HMS Scout plays a tiny, tiny part yet the ship and her company figure greatly in his life as all ships do in the circumstances. It is a privilege that does not happen very often when paths cross in such a manner. I can only say I am deeply grateful for his friendship and generosity in the writing of this, a small episode in the life of a small ship.

He confirms and adds to the accuracy of the final narrative.

Ken Flemming 2002.

My father joined the Royal Navy at HMS Drake, 28 April 1937 age 18yrs as an Ordinary Seaman, Official No. SSX 20676

Initial training was spent at **HMS Drake, H.M. Barracks, Devonport**, for a period of seven months until 28 Nov 1937.

*Built at the head of Keyham Creek and first opened as **HM Barracks, Vivid** on June 4 1889. Renamed in 1934 as **HM Barracks Drake**. Designed to accommodate, educate, feed and maintain fit and healthy sailors for dispersal to the fleet. The first purpose built naval barracks ashore it was an innovation of modern design and comfort to the men and boy seamen from the previous miserable living conditions of the hulks of Devonport. Constructed mainly in three stories using large blocks of Portland stone which gives the whole barracks a rather grim and bleak appearance.*

Thirty years on in 1967 I was attached to RNB Drake whilst standing by the Ton class Mine Hunter HMS Brinton at Devonport, shortly to sail for the Gulf. Having also previously completed a specialist course there three years earlier while serving on board HMS London, also age 18yrs. I found the barracks must have changed little from 1937. It was still a grim place retaining its three storey accommodation blocks and long wide-open messes. Each mess had its row of original polished spittoons now used for the disposal of waste paper! The only form of heating was a single solid fuel, pipe stove. Standing in the middle of the mess and which despite any low temperatures encountered, you were strictly forbidden to light! Double-stacked iron beds completely filled the remaining space with little other furniture; easy chairs were at a premium, grouped around the unlit stove, no tables. Polished cork boarded floors, waxed and buffed immaculately for inspection covered the planked decks. During 1937 and wartime each mess would contain two or three hundred men, either awaiting a draft or assembled as a ship's company standing by a ship, a very lively place indeed. On moving around the barracks, you were continually on the look out, for discipline was constant. Particularly near the parade ground or drill sheds, which area you avoided at all cost. If for some reason you found yourself there you were careful never to walk across the 'hollowed ground'. Or you ran the risk of *doubling* if caught which invariably, also meant the loss of your ID card and local shore leave for that night! Definitely not a place the majority of sailors wished to remain for long. Unless completing specialised training or standing by a ship, all new entrants including a ship's company grew up very rapidly!

Drafted **HMS Cornwall**, China and Home Fleet at Devonport 29 Nov 1937 for a period of ten months before returning to *Drake*, 15 Sep 1938.

A County class cruiser of 9,750 tons built at Devonport DY in 1926. Sunk by Japanese dive bombers from the carriers *Akagi*, *Soryu* and *Hiryu* in the Indian Ocean, South of Ceylon (01-54N 77-45E) on the 5 April 1942; 190 men were lost from her complement of 679. The survivors spent 30 hours in the sea after the sinking before finally being rescued.

Remained *Drake* for one week, 16-24 September before joining **HMS Basilisk** at Devonport 25 Sep 1938.

John Brown & Co, Clydebank, built Basilisk, a B class destroyer of 1,360 tons in 1931. She had a complement of 138. Damaged off La Panne, Dunkirk at 0800 on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1940 by dive-bombers: Sunk at 1200 in shallow waters and finally destroyed by gunfire and torpedoes from HMS Whitehall.

Remained with *Basilisk* for eight months until 19 April 1939. Rated AB.

On completion of sea training in *Cornwall* and *Basilisk* he was drafted to **HMS Dragonfly**, joining her at Hong Kong on 20 April 1939, after passage from Southampton on the troopship TS Demerara.

She carried many relief crews for the various ships stationed in the east including HMS Peterel a 1927 vintage river gunboat; *Peterel* became the last British Yangtze gunboat stationed on the river. Moored at Shanghai Reach on the Bund with only a skeleton crew on board at the outbreak of the Japanese war. Her Captain Lt. Stephen Polkinghorn RNR after being boarded by the Japanese and refusing to surrender famously told them to *get off my bloody ship*. Before being fired on at point blank range by a cruiser, a destroyer and a gunboat moored opposite using their main armament. Fifteen of the twenty-one British crew survived the sinking after returning fire with her sole armament of two Lewis machine guns.

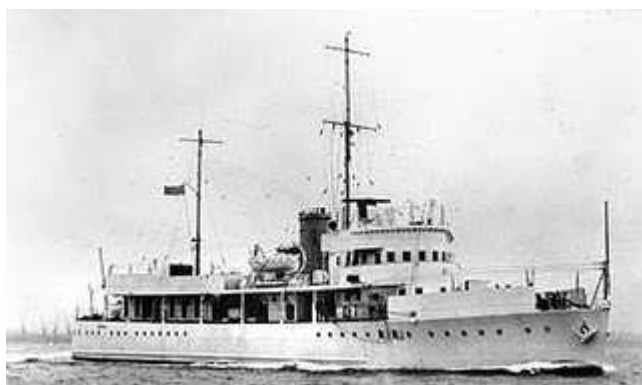
Previously there had been much confusion who was going to join which ship, particularly *Dragonfly*'s sister ship *Scorpion*. However he joined *Dragonfly* and saw service on the Yangtze River during a classic age, protecting British interests whilst engaged on anti piracy patrols.



Life was somewhat easy on station, all messing was done by Chinese mess boys who cooked their food in exchange for a portion of rice, clothing was washed by the *dhobi mess boy*. All unofficial Chinese crew were allocated a place on board and were paid by allowance from the mess members. It was a time when many Chinese ashore still wore the classic long pigtail.

*Dragonfly* patrolled the river 160 miles from the sea to Nanking capital of the south and as far as Wuhu a further sixty miles upstream. There was enough water in the river for 600 miles to Hankow for destroyers and sloops from the China Station to operate at all times in the year. From mid June to the end of September anything in the fleet including a 10,000-ton County class cruiser could reach the middle Yangtze at Hankow. This was the base for the British gunboat flotilla, while the smaller gunboats reached Chungking, 1,325 river miles from Shanghai! Chinese pirates were notoriously still operating in the South China seas this, combined with a warlord legacy left over from the opium wars meant anti boarding parties were regularly practiced, while on passage in the river using small arms and fixed bayonets. There was little ashore for the gunboats sailors for they could not enter the large towns, the Japanese had invaded China in 1938; Nanking and Wuhu were occupied by the Japanese army and were therefore off limits. The fleet shore canteen at Wuhu was an alternative and proved very popular, here the gunboat men met, drank and generally enjoyed themselves. He describes life on the river as being very cheap many bodies were seen floating downstream swept along in the strong current, he says *probably from the Japanese invasion*. No attempt was made by the British to retrieve them, *if you went in you would not get out* for accidentally falling into the swift flowing river meant you risked your own life, from drowning or disease! *The Chinese authorities eventually picked up and towed the bodies ashore by a length of rope behind a sampan*. Fifty years on he also remembered the smell of daily life on the river, *the duty quartermaster and other crewmembers on the upper deck would warn of an approaching barge carrying night soil, human fertilizer for use on the fields*. While the Chinese barge crew were totally oblivious to any smell the British *rapidly closed all doors and hatches until the barge had passed*. On returning to Shanghai shore leave was sometimes spent at a Portuguese owned bar aptly named 'Ma Jackson's'.

*Dragonfly* a Locust class river gunboat of 585 tons was a new build. First of her class, she had been



completed at Thornycroft's yard during December 1938. Before joining the Yangtze Flotilla on her first commission. The river gunboat was one of the most versatile vessels ever to serve with the Navy. In times of peace they represented stability in areas torn by civil war and foreign domination. In wartime they preformed a multitude of tasks including shore bombardment, store ship, troop carrier, headquarters ship and maintenance ship. HMS Locust, built 28 Sep 1939, was one of five Locust class

and the only one to survive the war, only being broken up in 1968, five years after I had joined the navy! *Mosquito* was sunk in home waters at 1330 1 June 1940 by dive-bombers off Dunkirk Channel. *Bee* intended as a replacement flagship for the Senior Naval Officer on the Yangtze was cancelled before building.

Three days after the outbreak of the European War in September 1939 all the Yangtze Flotilla gunboats apart from *Peterel*, she was to be used as a transmitting station, where ordered to sail for Hong Kong and then to Singapore via Saigon, arriving at Singapore in October.

On arrival *Dragonfly* was partially manned by Malayan ratings in order to free personnel for other ships.

*Scorpion* after sailing from Singapore on 10<sup>th</sup> February with a large number of civilians on board including women and children was sunk 13 Feb 1942 in action with Japanese destroyers in the Banka Strait, Java. Only three carley floats could be launched with the ship on fire from end to end approximately 20 survivors were taken prisoner, fate unknown. *Dragonfly* in company with *Grasshopper* was sunk the following day 14 Feb (St Valentine's Day) 1942 by a massed Japanese air attack of sixty-three low level twin engine bombers, flying in seven flights of nine aircraft off Rusuk Buaja Is., east of Sumatra; She carried a complement of 74 but at the time of her sinking had at least a further 250 army, civilian and nursing personnel on board who were attempting to escape from Singapore. She had sailed at 0200 that day under heavy fire from small arms and mortar bombs whilst alongside HMS Laburnum at Singapore.

Attacked during the late forenoon she received three direct hits in the engine and boiler rooms and on the mess deck were most of the army and civilian personnel were crammed. The force of the explosions blow open the bulkheads between decks while at the same time she lost her steering gear and telegraphs, coming to an immediate stop. She capsized and sank by the stern in less than ten minutes after the first attack began. Taking most of her ship's company and the majority of her passengers with her, only four of the army personnel survived. *Grasshopper* likewise heavily loaded was also sunk of Rusuk Is in the same attack, leaving very few survivors. *Grasshopper* was purposely run aground and abandoned before her magazines exploded. Many survivors from *Dragonfly* were killed in the water when they were machine gunned from the rear turrets of the last flight of nine aircraft. Amongst six women survivors were two who gave birth on the beach of the island on which they landed. They were assisted by the ship's Cox'n. PO G.L. White, and duly christened George and Leonard!

'From the Yangtse River Gunboats  
Only one in ten returned  
When the Little Ships Flottilla  
Off Malaya redly burned  
The jungled isles fell silent  
And the heaving water sighed  
As the women and the children  
And the sailors rudely died.'

The Little Ships Flotilla, Edwin Varley.

The Royal Navy will never see their like again.

He said he later met one of the survivors in Drake barracks who told him they had been machined gunned in the water. He also told of meeting somebody he knew from Hong Kong at Devenport who was very surprised to see him. Saying *it was like seeing a ghost*, thinking he had been lost with *Dragonfly*.

#### WHATS IN A DRAFT CHIT



A photograph obviously taken to show the 'new' and 'first' naval beard and probably especially taken to be sent home. Age twenty-one.



Further drafted **HMS Redstart** 1st April 1940 based at Kowloon on Mainland China, Hong Kong. A Linnet class coastal minelayer of 498 tons she carried 12 mines and was armed with one 12-pdr gun. Used for laying a 'controlled minefield', the mines were detonated from shore as part of the harbour defences. She was scuttled at Hong Kong on the 19 Dec 1941, very few of her crew surviving the war.



Onboard *Redstart* at Hong Kong probably waiting for the 'first' liberty boat ashore. The matelot in the middle is a 'three badge man' that is the good conduct stripes on his arm shows he has served at least twelve years of, *undetected crime!* One stripe awarded for each four years service, calculated from the age of eighteen. Also rated a Petty Officer, crossed anchors above stripes and gunnery rate, right arm. Dad, to the right had by now one good conduct stripe, at least 'four years service', rated able seaman and, also gunnery rate, QR3. Everybody on the lower deck looked up to the three-badge man for his, age, experience and wisdom? Twelve years was the minimum time spent in the navy. Most had twenty years service and experience, knew all the tricks and had probably spent, during this particular period, several years in the China fleet. Thus ensuring a run ashore for

the new hands or sprogs was always going to be entertaining. Many a three-badge man of this and my later service remained an able seaman. Preferring the limited responsibility of a junior rate. He could still be 'jack' ashore, yet retain some respect on board without retaining any of the discipline of a Leading Hand or senior rate, Petty officer or Chief Petty Officer.

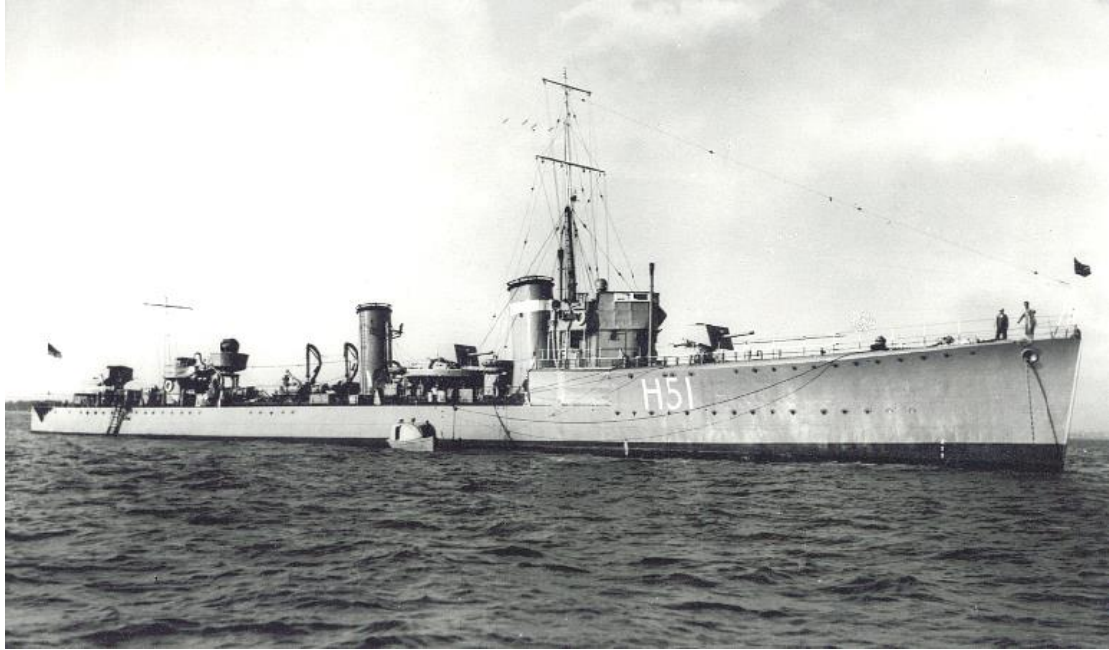
With the Japanese war still more than twelve months away whilst still with *Redstart* he was attached to *Tamar* a wooden sailing hulk used as an accommodation ship at Hong Kong for a specialist gunnery course. When on completion he was rated QR3, during the course he was drafted to HMS *Thracian*, but in his own words *did not join!* *Thracian* was lost at Hong Kong with only half a dozen survivors!

The successful completion of this course meant he was available to serve anywhere in the fleet as a newly qualified gunnery rating.

He was finally drafted to HMS *Scout*; other members of the same course were drafted to other ships on station also to await their unknown fate!



The Scouting badge and motto. Be prepared  
Barry wavy of six white and blue; a fleur-de-lys gold



HMS Scout seen here at Portsmouth in 1935  
 S class destroyer; 905 tons, 276ft long by 26.75ft; maximum speed 31knots; normal complement 98;  
 Main armament three 4-in guns; laid down by John Brown & Co, Clydebank, 24.4.1918.

Drafted at Hong Kong to (1 mess) HMS Scout, 1st Nov 1940.

Towards the end of World War 1, a large number of Admiralty S class fast destroyers had been built. They were armed with three 4" guns and four torpedo tubes as seen here. Later the midship gun was removed and two, two pound pom pom anti-aircraft guns installed. They did not have a very long range because they had been built to operate mainly in the North Sea and around the British coast. Despite her late build it is thought *Scout* fired her guns in anger in the North Sea during 1918. At the outbreak of World War 11 there were eleven of the class left in service and were by this time generally referred to as *the scrap iron flotilla*. Spread out across the world they were mainly used for local defence or as 'harbour guard ship'. Some had been handed over to the RAN, while others remained in the Mediterranean.

Five were in the Far East, *Scout*, *Thracian* and *Thannet* at Hong Kong while *Tenedos* and *Stronghold* were at Singapore. All were taken in hand for limited conversions to minelayers, using the old *hand* laying method because of their smaller dimensions.

**All of the class, in such hostile waters were sunk apart from *Scout***, the remaining six in not so hostile waters survived only to be broken up after the war, apart from *Sturdy*. She was wrecked on the West Coast of Scotland during 1940 with the loss of three of her company.

*Scout* had sailed from Sheerness on 27 Oct 1938 for the China Station. She had by this time seen more than 20yrs service it was therefore planned for the ship to go into reserve whilst on station. With the changing war situation it was decided she should remain in commission and act as an Independent Command on arrival at Singapore instead of reducing to reserve. Commissioned 20 September 1938 at Chatham she would normally be manned from her homeport (Chatham) but because of the 'present emergency', she was manned with a special Portsmouth crew. The officers were billeted in HMS Pembroke during pre-passage refit and trials. Arrived Gibraltar, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov, sailing the following day for Malta, arrived the 5<sup>th</sup> departing five days later. Arrived on the 13<sup>th</sup> at Port Said for passage through the Suez Channel the next day. Arrived Aden 20<sup>th</sup> and remained here for a little more than two weeks to enable her C.O. to, undergo an operation.

Despite an extensive refit and trials before leaving which included repairs to a defect in her port-main (steam) bulkhead valve. It was taking a great deal of maintenance and docking to keep the ship operational. She developed more problems on passage with a leak in her main (boiler) feed tank forcing the ship to enter dry dock at the R.N. dockyard, Bombay whilst further repairs were carried out.



During the passage from Aden at 1651hrs on the 7<sup>th</sup> Dec in position 14<sup>o</sup> 48 N 54<sup>o</sup> 48W the ship was in an underwater collision with a whale. No damage could be found to the ship though several severe propeller cuts were visible on the carcass. Arrived Colombo on the 19<sup>th</sup> and carried out a boiler clean. Having done this myself on HMS London 25yrs later in 1963, it's a dirty, hot and tiring job for the stokers! Arrived Singapore 28<sup>th</sup> Dec 1938 and finally Hong Kong 17 Jan 1939. Immediately taken in hand for repairs and docking at Kaikoo on the northeast corner of the island.

Her orders by now had changed from an independent command at Singapore she was ordered to join the other Hong Kong destroyers *Thanet* and *Thracian* to form part of the 'local defence division'. usefully employed, quietly and without publicity they laid a whole series of defensive mine-fields, off Hong Kong, Penang, Singapore and Borneo. Each was fitted with rails to carry forty broad gauge mines, they used up the stocks of the old type mines held in that part of the world as insurance against the growing ambitions of Japan. *There was a fair amount of time spent at sea, patrolling, on exercises, target practice day and night and day and night torpedo attacks.* *Scout* carried her own complement of Chinese mess boys much the same as *Dragonfly's* he enjoyed Hong Kong saying *it was a great time they never thought the Japanese would become their enemies.* Even though they had been at war with China for more than two years. Both navies when exercising at night would darken ship, no lights at all showing, they would then play a cat and mouse game. When near to each other the captain would give the order *open shutters, that would mean open the signalling lamp, (searchlight) both ships would illuminate each other to let them know they had been seen, this was before the days of radar.* *The Japanese ships had the more powerful searchlights ours were like a candle compared to theirs; of course, their ships were modern and much bigger than ours.* *Scout* when on one of these patrols had picked up a number of Chinese survivors from the sea whilst being watched by the Japanese destroyer that had sunk them outside Hong Kong.



The time spent in *Dragonfly* must have taught him that 'small' boat service suited him well. From personal experience it is a far different navy, much less disciplined. The ships company are able to get away from the many irksome and traditional naval routines, coupled with a strong feeling of camaraderie amongst the crew. It was natural he should volunteer for service with the 2<sup>nd</sup> MTB Flotilla based at Hong Kong. Under the command of Lt-Cdr G.H. Gandy RN, the local Chinese knew them as *wind thunder boats* because of their high speed and the ear-splitting roar of their engines. He was refused this request by the commanding officer of HMS Scout, Lt-Cdr Hedworth Lambton RN.

The entire flotilla of eight MTB's was subsequently lost together with most of the crews when the Japanese invaded the Island during Dec 1941. Sixty-seven survivors landed on the coast of Guangdong near Nam-0 after scuttling the surviving boats in Mirs Bay, on Mainland China. They were then forced to make an epic 2,880-mile overland journey that took 51 days, finally ending in Rangoon and freedom. Accomplished only with the help of the legendary 'one legged' Chinese Admiral; Admiral Sir Andrew Chan Chak K.B.E.



Lieutenant Christopher Briggs, RNR 1<sup>st</sup> Lt HMS Scout.

All his service was spent on small ships; which may have been personal choice; given it was wartime it was more likely to have been the drafting authorities choice. *Scout* was dry-docked at Taikoo, Hong Kong for bottom scraping when the Japanese forces attacked the colony at 0500 on 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 1941. These were the first shots of the Japanese war; Malaya was similar attacked at 0730 while the first wave of the airborne attack at Pearl Harbour started a little later at 0753.

After being hurriedly undocked by her ship's company who flooded the dock with the help of the European dock staff after the Chinese work force failed to turn up when the first air raids began and leaving behind apart from the officers steward her Chinese mess boys. Also the wife of her Executive Officer who he says *probably did not survive*. *Scout* left the dockyard at about 1830 that same day in company with *Thanet* to Singapore making her way through the boom gate outside Lyemun Pass at 1915, the boom was already open and ready for them to pass through. Many of her ships company expressed a wish to their 1<sup>st</sup> Lt, hoping his wife would be all right. Most of them knew her as she often came on board, while some were in a somewhat similar position, leaving behind Chinese girlfriends!

At first it seems a little strange the ships should sail considering the flotilla formed a good part of the local defence division! In war things are always going to be sacrificed and even at this early stage it had already been decided, Hong Kong was un-defendable. The Royal Navy was over stretched in the European war and simply could not take on the might of Japan and her Navy on its own. We could afford to lose this corner of England but we must defend that great bastion of Empire, Singapore.

At the insistence of Churchill who continually retained a wilful blind spot and stubborn refusal to face facts with regard to the menace posed by the Imperial Japanese Navy and its air power. The third largest and probably the most modern, he continually underestimated. While over estimating the power and strength of the United States Navy in the Pacific. Much against Admiralty wishes due to the lack of air cover, two of the most famous battleships of the RN. The new, HMS Prince of Wales and the old battle cruiser HMS Repulse were sent to Singapore to protect the colony and arrived there on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec together with six attendant destroyers, making up what became known as Force Z.

At the insistence of the Senior American Admiral, Thomas C. Hart based at Manila in a deal struck with Admiral Tom Phillips, Commander in Chief of Force Z. The transfer of four US destroyers were to be effected to help in the defence of Malaya. Providing the Hong Kong destroyers were also transferred to join them at Singapore to make up a combined defensive force. *Tracian* had not sailed with them she had been fitted out for mine laying and was needed in the defence of Hong Kong.



HMS Scout at Hong Kong Local Defence Flotilla

Admiral Phillips decided to sail from Singapore with only four of the escorting destroyers, *Tenedos*, *Express*, *Electra* and *Vampire* on the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> Dec to attack a reported Japanese landing off Kuantan, on the east coast of Malay and not wait for the US or Hong Kong destroyers to join him. *Scout* had received a signal to sail and help protect Force Z, whilst doing so they received signals direct from the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* off Malaya telling of the ships action with Japanese aircraft. She then received a further signal from C-in-C Singapore on the 10<sup>th</sup> during passage *don't bother both ships sunk!*

Admiral Phillips was subsequently lost with the *Prince of Wales* & *Repulse*, along with 850 officers and men. Just three days after the opening of the Pacific war and Pearl Harbour. The far outdated thinking behind the policy, a 'Main Fleet' would defend Singapore was doomed from the outset. With no air cover most ships on station were always going to be sunk, frighteningly almost at leisure. Of the six escorting or attendant destroyers of Force Z, five, *Tenedos*, *Electra*, *Jupiter*, *Encounter* and *Vampire* were sunk in the next few weeks, as were all the remaining S class apart from *Scout*. *Vampire* was overcome by a direct bomb hit in her boiler room closely followed by another which broke her in two, the two parts sinking separately, surprisingly the records state only 8 men were lost? The sixth *Express* went on to survive the war as did *Scout*. *Express* had come alongside *Prince of Wales* just before she sank to take off survivors. In 1943, she was transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy and lived on until 1956.

*Scout* and *Thanet* reached Singapore via Manila, Tarakan and Batavia where they had refuelled, two days later on the 12<sup>th</sup> after a perilous 1,400-mile passage through enemy-controlled waters. During which time they passed uncomfortably close to a powerful Japanese squadron. Which, by good fortune and having no radar, failed to see both ships! *Scout* did meet a fishing boat, which they promptly sank; he says, *I felt sorry for them for they were only ordinary fishermen, probably Korean*. *Scout's* commanding officer Lt. Lampton decided they could radio their position to the Japanese and therefore sank them after taking the crew on board. Her 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Christopher Briggs say's of this incident, *just after lunch on the 11<sup>th</sup> we intercepted a Japanese fishing trawler. The trawler had no fish on board but was fitted with extensive radio gear and was quite obviously keeping a lookout for targets for Japanese aircraft. We took the crew off, there were twelve of them, and sank the trawler*. If found both ships would have been sunk, they were under orders to avoid all Japanese ships, not to go against them, at all if possible, and get to Singapore. They finally joined *Tenedos* at the naval base Sembawang on the north of the island. *Tenedos* had been with force Z at the time of the sinking and had the task of picking up survivors and returning them to Singapore the day before.

Most of *Scout's* ships company were now drafted to *Stronghold*, one of the original Singapore local defence destroyers. Like *Thracian* at Hong Kong he again *did not join*, she was sunk on 2 March 42 by

three Japanese cruisers and two destroyers! Leaving the survivors including the wounded in the water. From her wartime compliment of 120 plus about 50 evacuees from Java, one officer and 49 others were picked up in the water two days later by a captured Dutch ship and transferred to the Japanese cruiser *Maya*; few returned after being prisoners of the Japanese in Celebes for almost four years.

*Scout* was now able to carry out her finest work since her launch in 1918; including her later war service at Colombo, with the Eastern Fleet. Whilst acting as harbour guard ship at Singapore she was used for the single purpose of protecting and escorting the reinforcing convoys into the beleaguered colony. After it was clear no more reinforcements would arrive and after the fall of Penang on the 19<sup>th</sup> Dec. The ship supported clandestine operations to disrupt Japanese communications in the Malacca Strait and was made leader of the Perak Flotilla. On Sunday December 28 backed by local small craft, this scratch flotilla organised by the navy and operating in support of Roseforce. Which included two companies of Royal Marines who were survivors of *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* under the command of Major A.J.C. Rose. Gave considerable inshore assistance to army units along Malaya's western coast near Trong were they were able to ambush some lorries and staff cars on the coast road.

The Japanese air force having complete mastery of the air consequently sank the flotilla's depot ship *Kudat*, on New Years Eve in Port Swettenham. Effectively preventing base support for further operations. The next day five Eureka class motor torpedo boats, recently acquired from the United States, were bombed and sunk as they went north to replace the Perak Flotilla. The force was therefore disbanded and *Scout* was redeployed in January 1942 to Singapore, again on local convoy escort. Whilst on these duties in the Malacca Strait the ship was bombed two or three times a day, during one attack she received a *very near miss* resulting in one of her after gun crew being wounded in the arm. Next day when refuelling in Singapore he was discharged ashore to the hospital, not so unlucky was his easily found replacement who on joining the ship, survived along with *Scout* to make it home; such is the fate of war.

Her duties together with two small armed merchant ships, one the 300 ton *Vyner Brooke*, (later sunk with great loss of life) were to escort the many evacuation convoys from Singapore to the Old Dutch city of Batavia, Java (now Jakarta) and also to patrol further north off Sumatra looking for any Japanese incursion. What the old ship could have done on these later duties while being bombed and armed only with two breech loading 4-in guns is much in doubt. To the many refugees in the escape from Singapore, Java and Sumatra she must have been seen as a tremendous relief and hope flying the white ensign. Whilst on these same duties *Thanet* the destroyer who had made that high-speed dash with them from Hong Kong was sunk within twenty minutes in the last offensive naval action of the Malayan campaign.

When due to relieve *Scout* on patrol she had the misfortune in running into the Japanese destroyers *Amagiri*, *Hatsuyuki* and *Shirayuki* – supported by the cruiser *Sendai* off Endau, Malaya 27 Jan 1942. There were 57 survivors from a complement of 120 who were lucky to make it ashore were they were also fortunate to link up with the navigator of a shot down RAF Vildebeest who had fought in the same action and who's pilot and air gunner on capture had been beheaded by the Japanese.

After walking for some time they found a junk and with typical naval nonchalance sailed it back to Singapore. HMAS *Vampire* who was in the same action escaped undamaged behind her own smokescreen. I have no doubt *Scout's* ships company must have felt her sister ships fate and that of her crew, all well known to them, was going to be their own. Most of her survivors were lucky to get away from Singapore on board the old E class cruiser *Enterprise* which survived the war, only to be broken up in 1946.

## The Luck of the Scout

Malaya was a mess, Singapore had become chaotic, all records were destroyed or lost during the Japanese occupation. It is therefore difficult to establish when *Scout* finally sailed from Singapore together with the many other vessels crammed with service and civilian personnel as could be packed aboard. In the ships movement log for her *entire* wartime career. It gives all dates for arrival and departures apart from the one vital date, the day she left Singapore! Instead there is a simple question mark, entered by her watch-keeping officer in the departure column. Which clearly indicates the strain of those times. In his own testimony he said, he remembered is 'oppo' (mate) was ashore in the dockyard scrounging things from the many abandoned stores and offices including the most popular item spirits, when Japanese infantry suddenly appeared running along the quayside, apparently happy



to try and board the ship. He shouted to him to get back and join, to which he promptly did. I have no doubt at all that this incident took place but find it hard to reconcile the dates.

In the official history, it states the Japanese entered the naval base on 11<sup>th</sup> February; notwithstanding an advance guard? The last convoy sailed on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> while Singapore surrendered on the 15<sup>th</sup> therefore *Scout* would have sailed either on the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> February 1942. However according to Geoffrey Brooke, *Singapore's Dunkirk*, page 204, *Scout* sailed for Batavia, Java on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> with Admiral Spooner's, wife onboard. Together with the Admiral's Flag Lieutenant, steward, coxswain, and his wine cellar as a gift to *Scout's* wardroom, (Christopher Briggs.) When specially asked, he had no recollection at all of the wife of the C-in-C embarking *Scout*. In Alice Briggs book, *From Peking to Perth* page 150, she states *Scout* sailed on the 10<sup>th</sup> together with the Admirals wife, staff and some survivors from the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*.

Away to the west there was a continuous thunder of fire from the battlefield and continual air raids both day and night. The first landings on Singapore Island were made on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> February between Kranji and Berih River near to the naval base. He relates how they were told of this by renegade Australian troops roaming the dockyard the next day, telling them the Japanese had landed and for them to get away. What is certain her 1<sup>st</sup> Lt, Christopher Briggs undoubtedly saved the ship when on returning from her last arduous seven-week Sumatra patrol on the 7<sup>th</sup>. The day before the Japanese landed and after the naval base had been abandoned, which by now was completely deserted and partially covered by a haze of black and grey smoke. He went ashore, commandeered a lorry, located and collected some badly needed stores himself to make good her engine and boiler-room defects. After running the gauntlet of the Japanese and getting into Singapore for the spares all they had to do now was get away?

In his words during the previous weeks whilst on patrol the ship was *bombed every day*. He said *Scout* only survived the attacks because of the skill and ship handling of her experienced Captain, Lt-Cdr H. Lambton RN. Whom he describes as *being quite old at the time, one of the best he had served under, a gentleman*, avoiding the high-level air attacks. He acted as quartermaster or helmsman during these attacks or equally as a bridge lookout. Judging through binoculars when the bomb doors opened on the attacking aircraft, saying to her captain, *bombs gone sir*. Lambton who was busy conning the ship on hearing this, would only then take action to alter course. He says if they had been dive-bombers or if the attacking aircraft had carried torpedoes they would not have survived!



This photograph brings home just how small the *Scout* was, while they were alongside in Java a group walked past and a remark was directed at the ship *what's that*. It obviously stuck with him; they were calling the ship, which he didn't like. There is no doubt *Scout* carried out some vital work and saved many, many lives.

From the confusion of Singapore they reached Java and the equal confusion of Tanjong Priok, Batavia probably entering sometime during the 11<sup>th</sup> of February. They were very lucky again during this passage which was uneventful for the weather was cloudy, which probably saved them from being spotted by the many searching Japanese aircraft. In a contemporary description, the confusion and chaos of the port is described similar to the last day at Singapore. There was no respite from the attacks; the port and congested anchorage were under constant attack from the air. The Javanese stevedores and dockers similar to Hong Kong's labour force took to the interior at these attacks making it more difficult for the ship's company to fuel, ammunition and provision ship. The army gave some help to her exhausted company with the loading of stores.

Here were assembled the entire surviving British, Australian, American and Dutch cruisers and destroyers of mixed vintage left in the Far East. To make up an allied fleet to face the resources of the world's newest and third largest navy. The fleet if they remained to fight it out, and there was never any doubt they would – faced certain defeat; destruction was almost inevitable, with lucky escape the only hope for a fortunate few. The combined striking force came under the command of the Dutch Vice Admiral C.E.L. Helfrich RNLN. Who divided the ships into two groups, the Western Striking Force

based at Tanjong Priok and an Eastern Striking Force based further down the coast at the Dutch naval base of Sourabaya.

The Western force comprised the Australian cruiser *Hobart*, the obsolete British cruisers *Danae* and *Dragon* as well as the antiquated *Scout* and *Tenedos*. Together with the new but untried Dutch destroyer *Evertson* this force was ordered to sail at 2200 on February 26 to carry out a search and intercept of Admiral Kurita's Western attack Group. Which comprised the carrier *Ruyjo*, a seaplane tender, four heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, about 25 destroyers and between 50 to 60 transports and freighters. The opposing British force lacked the firepower, armour and speed of the more modern vessels and was puny in comparison. Nevertheless it steamed north, up the dreaded Banka Strait, this gap between the enemy-controlled Banka Island and Sumatra, became known as Dive Bomb Alley and was almost impassable. The fleet was to make contact with a convoy of enemy transports thought to be at Muntok in Banka Island where there was a possibility that it may be found weakly escorted. The Japanese sighted the British force from the air and Kurita detached two heavy and two light cruisers plus three destroyer flotillas to intercept. There was no contact and the British ships called off the search, it is unnecessary to observe that failure to meet the enemy was a deliverance from suicide. They survived an air attack from the Japanese fleet when eight bombs were dropped, to make Tanjong Priok by about noon the following day, Friday 27<sup>th</sup>. The only remaining allied aircraft were a few obsolete torpedo carrying Vildebeest flown out during the escape from Singapore. They were waiting to attack the invasion fleet in a strike in support of the ships but were never called upon. Having just tied up at the dock to refuel and water they were further attacked from the air some of the bombs exploding on the jetty almost alongside, *the Dragon just ahead was straddled by the bombs*. They were ordered to sail again shortly before midnight to make a night attack on an enemy force reported 110 miles to the north (1.) If the enemy were not found by 0430 they were to reverse course, pass through the Sunda Strait and fuel at Tjilatjap on Java's south coast. The administration of this port and its facilities had also by now virtually disintegrated and there was little fuel. After passing through the strait they were further ordered to proceed on the 28<sup>th</sup> to Trincomalee, Ceylon.

They set forth and steamed north for the allotted period, *but found nothing*. It is strange to think why in fact they did not!

Their approach had been seen by Japanese aircraft and *Scout* was attacked by an aircraft which dropped four bombs. *Crucially the Japanese reported all the British ships to be one class larger than they really were*, reporting three battleships and two cruisers. The Japanese escort commander, highly alarmed, turned the whole convoy northwards to withdraw from this unexpectedly strong enemy force!

Having sighted no enemy, the British ships followed its instructions and proceeded out into the Indian Ocean. The Japanese convoy it had been seeking lost a day in retreating from its exaggerated menace and then turned back to Java!

Faulty Japanese intelligence and reporting did more than anything to save *Scout* and the remainder of the force. An incredible piece of extreme good fortune!

This order saved the ships; to stay behind would have been further useless sacrifice. Of the ten ships of the Eastern Strike Force based on the naval base at Sourabaya, five were sunk just four and a half hours after *Scout* left Tanjong and the remaining five the following day the 28<sup>th</sup> all during the Battle of the Java Sea, described by British naval historian David Thomas author of the study by that name, as *the most crucial naval battle since Jutland* and, therefore Trafalgar?

Thirteen of the seventeen allied ships in the battle were lost trying to stop the invasion of the Dutch East Indies. Such was the confidence of the local Dutch people who were celebrating the same evening when hearing, *the boom of guns during a great naval battle, off Cheribon*, (north-western Java), thinking it could only be a victory for the allies!

The *Evertson* who had been on the search and intercept with *Scout* the previous day lost contact in a rain squall and passed through the Sunda Strait a little later. Whilst doing so she ran into a Japanese destroyer force looking for the escaping flotilla, during the ensuing night action she was forced aground and became a total loss, all of her ships company survived the grounding but not Japanese internment. On gaining the open sea, *Scout* and her sister ship from Hong Kong, *Tenedos* were desperate for fuel, altering course northwards they steamed along the west coast of Sumatra, whilst remaining close inshore zigzagging in and out amongst the numerous small islands. Nature was again kind to the escaping ships, a tropical storm broke, and drenching rain, thunder, and lightning hid them from the many searching Japanese aircraft. Their problems were not over, the fuel situation was critical if they were to reach Ceylon so rapid had the Japanese advance been all its forces were stretched.



Lambton took an exceptional risk; under cover of darkness on 1<sup>st</sup> March he steamed at full speed into the port of Padang, Sumatra! The two destroyers had gone in at midnight while *Dragon* circled around outside waiting for their return. At 3 a.m. *Tenedos* came out laden with refugees, mainly women and children, some in their nightclothes and about forty wounded Indian soldiers, for the next hour as many as possible were transferred to the cruiser. The little *Scout* remained alongside until *Dragon* entered the harbour herself and switched on her searchlights to find her still busy moored stern first, her bows to the sea, taking on oil at the jetty. The ships had taken the Japanese completely by surprise. In their hurry southwards to close the Sunda Straits they had left a small garrison to look after the town a few miles from a harbour littered with sunken vessels. The three ships losing no more time and with much relief; fully loaded with 700 refugees who had scabbled and fought to get on board finally turned for the open sea. *Hobart* also came in to oil and took off a further 512 escapers and survivors, these were the last to escape the clutches of the Japanese. The ships company exhausted from their efforts of the previous weeks found no relief from the constant watch keeping duties while also continually being closed up at action stations. All the space and what little provisions they had remaining were given over to their new passengers. Amongst much enjoyment, clapping, waving and cheering, almost hysteria from her civilians the ships reached Ceylon and safety on 5<sup>th</sup> March. In their own particular way despite the constant defeats, the small units of the Royal Navy had won through; the white ensign was triumphant.

Soon after arrival he was sent with the rest of the ships company who he says *had, had it rough* to a rest camp in the hills of Ceylon. Before taking passage to Cape Town, South Africa on board a Dutch troopship from where he took further unescorted passage to England on the TS New Amsterdam. Arriving at Liverpool he returned passing through Wigan, and other hometowns with many of *Scout's* original ships company to Drake Barracks arriving there on 4 May 1942. On the rail journey to Plymouth they were held up at Exeter because of an air raid, after being granted immediate leave he was again held up the following day on the return journey from Plymouth at Exeter with a further raid. This anxious journey home from Plymouth alone took 24hrs to complete but what a welcome they had in the public houses of Wigan.



Able Seaman H. Makinson a torpedo specialist rating, also from Wigan served on *Scout* during this commission, I suspect they were good 'oppo's' who obviously had gone through some momentous events together. He never talked about him, only finally in the later days, after his illness and close to his own death did he even elude to me he was one of *Scout's* ships company and then only, almost as an afterthought!

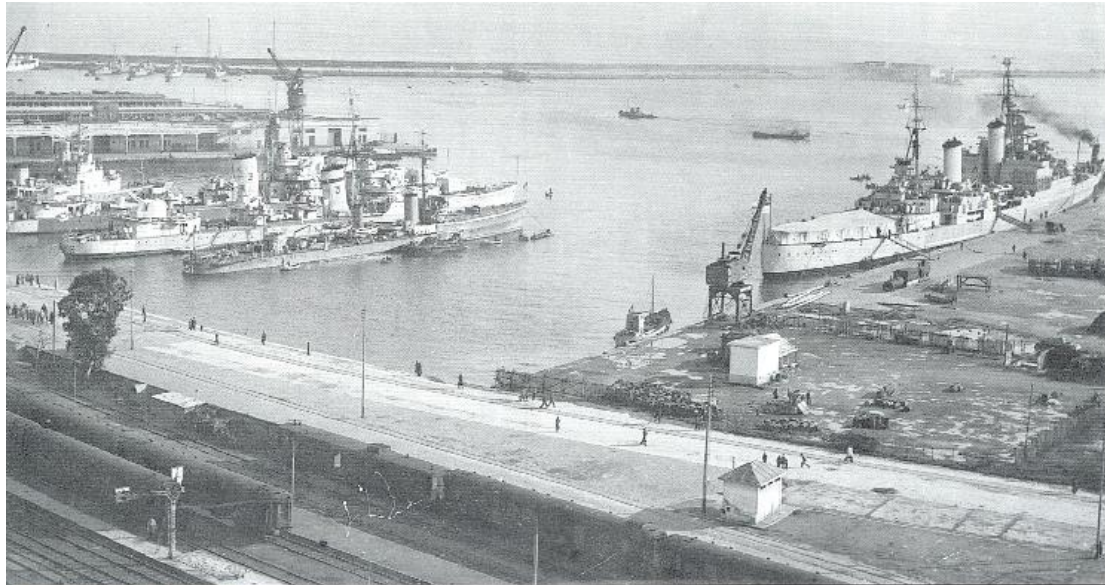
Perhaps part of the inscription on the photograph is the giveaway, *Hong Kong*, was this taken whilst serving on *Scout* at the time? He was lost whilst serving on HMS Mourne during D. Day. *Mourne* was a new River class frigate completed just one year before she was sunk at 1145hrs on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944, 40 miles south-west of the Lizard by the *new* homing torpedo fired from U-767. Her bows and part of the forward section was blown off in the initial explosion, she sank in less than a minute, number of survivors' unknown.

Perhaps it links with other memories when again just before his death he again confided that another friend had been decapitated while stood next to him during a Japanese air attack on the fleet while serving on HMS Wessex.

*Scout* remained with the Eastern Fleet still carrying out further good work while based at Colombo, joining force B three weeks after arriving on 31 March. This force comprised the Aircraft Carrier *Hermes*, (sunk nine days later after the arrival of *Scout* on 9 April 1942 off Batticaloa, Ceylon with the loss of 307 of her company), the Cruiser *Caledon* and her old friend *Dragon*. She redeployed in July of that year to her now familiar convoy escort duties, this time in the Indian Ocean. Remaining in these duties until January 1944 when it was found while under refit in Bombay the extent of repairs required to her machinery and boilers was uneconomic to complete. Completely worn out she became accommodation ship at Trincomalee for the destroyer maintenance personnel in which role she remained until the end of the war. She sailed for the U.K. in December 1945 to pay off, and was sold on 11 February to TW Ward at Briton Ferry for breaking up, the finally irony necessitated her arriving undertow on 2 March 1946.

*Tenedos* her sister ship that had gone through so much with them was not so lucky. She did not survive the war; she was sunk with the loss of 33 of her company in the 'safe' harbour at Colombo during a Japanese air attack on 5<sup>th</sup> April, one month to the day after arriving. The *lucky Scout* avoided the same

fate because she was at sea with force B *looking, unsuccessfully* for the carrier fleet that had launched the attacks! *Tenedos* refitting at the time would normally have been at sea with *Scout*. She was the only RN ship to be attacked and sunk, *her luck* had finally run out!



This classic photograph brings home the size of, *the little Scout* who had fought through some of the most hostile waters in the world and gone against the might of the Japanese fleet in the Banka Strait. Seen outboard, alongside the 'modern' destroyers *Marne* and *Musketeer* in Algiers Harbour on 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 1946. She was passing through the port whilst returning from the East Indies Station after her war service. To the right is the cruiser HMS Liverpool, with the Commander-in Chief, Mediterranean embarked.

This was only the beginning of his war on return from leave in July 1942 he saw service on Atlantic Convoys on HMS Watchman with Lt, later Sir Ludovic Kennedy, who recalled to me his memories of some very rough Atlantic crossings, while also turning down an invitation from myself to join The 1805 Club!

Then back to the Japanese war in the Pacific in May 1944 and many Kamikaze attacks on board the new destroyer, HMS Wessex with the American fleet. *Wessex* was in company with her sister ship HMS Whelp, commanded by HRH Prince Phillip. Finally ending the war and leaving the Navy in Feb 1946, this however was not the end of his naval service. He was recalled for Korea and served again in 1951 and 52. As this son remembers well.

The eleven Admiralty S class Destroyers which served during WW11 and their fate.  
*Sabre*, b/u 1946, *Saladin* b/u 1947, *Sardonyx* b/u (Preston) 1945, *Scimitar* b/u 1947, *Scout* b/u 1946, *Shikari* b/u 1945, (built 1924) *Stronghold* sunk, *Sturdy* wrecked 1940, *Tenedos* sunk, *Thanet* sunk, *Thracian* sunk.

### Primary Sources

Various ships draft and joining dates together with specialist courses are taken from his official record and certificates.

**Two tape recordings made on November 15 1993** give *on interview* his time spent on the Yangtze River, Hong Kong and Singapore. These together with many previous difficult conversations over many years are used for the first part of the narrative, from joining the navy, up to the escape from Singapore. The 'after' period in Java and Sumatra is little mentioned. Despite my many promptings the constant action stations, air attacks, defence watches and 'normal routine' at the time seems to have left him with little or no detailed memory of that period, or a reluctance to recall events. After all it was only a period of survival in a long war!

**For HMS Scout herself** much contemporary information is drawn from the, *Ship Movement Records for WW2*, held at the **Royal Navy Museum Library, Portsmouth**. The ship's movements,

operational requirements and details of refits and maintenance for her entire wartime career are here (with dates). Entered by her watch-keeping officers it is a *fact* of the ships life. Notes include her 'first' wartime refit, the outward journey and collision with a whale, plus her subsequent deployment.

*Scouts* Java and Sumatra ordeal is also found in, ***The Luck of HMS Dragon, E.H. Little. AB; published Cape Town, South Africa 1944.*** Written by one of her able seaman it gives some account of both ships at Singapore however it is mostly useful for filling in many details from the time the ships left, until arriving at Ceylon.

Naval historians tend to dismiss such narratives as gossip and second-hand, however they are now thankfully becoming more recognized, filling in detail that would normally not have been available. This small and scarce work is extremely valuable; I have therefore also relied heavily on it for the 'after' period.

***The British Naval Staff History, War with Japan, 4 Volumes, 1995.*** Contains the full official version of WW11 events in the Pacific. Although naturally sketchy for individual units it must also be taken as a primary source, detailing in context with other accounts it is an excellent *first-hand record*. The incident of her engineer officer obtaining spares, **which undoubtedly saved the ship and her company** at Singapore, are drawn from here. However even official histories sometimes tend to mislead, or certainly lack basic information and should not be taken as the gospel truth. Small ships as *Scout* do not carry engineer officers and it was in fact her 1<sup>st</sup> Lt, Christopher Briggs in company with the Chief Boatswains Mate, the Chief Stoker, the Leading Asdic rating and two seamen who located the ships spare asdic dome and more importantly boiler bricks used to line the boiler furnace without which she could not operate. Details not at all described in the official history.

I was trained as late as 1963 in the same boiler system used on *Scout*, the Babcock and Wilcox Admiralty three drum boiler. Spending my initial sea training operating this on board the 1943 built destroyer HMS *Urchin*, the boiler brickwork needed to be carefully maintained and was very difficult to change, particularly in a short period. It was undeniable fine work, coupled with long hours by all her engine room personnel that enabled the ship to raise steam and sail the following day. And escape!

***Navy News February/March 1998.*** Fate of HMS *Thracian*.

***Warship World Vol. 6 No 8, published by Maritime Books, Liskeard.*** Contains the 'Algiers' photograph of *SCOUT*.

## **Bibliography**

*Hai Kuan. The Sea Gate*, Christopher Briggs MBE. Pub, 1997 Lane Publishers, 61 Charles Street, Stockport, Cheshire. Details the author's life up to 1939 that includes a fascinating account of life in the Chinese Maritime Customs Service.

*Farewell Hong Kong (1941)*, Christopher Briggs MBE. Pub, Hesperian Press 65, Oats Street Carlisle 6101 Western Australia. 2001. For the escape of HMS *Scout*, the last ship to get away from Hong Kong after the Japanese invasion see pages 1 to 26.

*From Peking To Perth*, Alice Briggs. Pub, Artlook Books. Stirling Street, Perth, Western Australia 1984. Appendix 1, HMS *Scout*.

*Into the Minefields, British Destroyer Minelaying 1918 – 1960.* Peter C Smith Pen & Sword 2005  
Early account of HMS *Scout*, see pages: 114, 122, 180, - 81 – 90 – 92, 201 including an interesting note regarding the loss of *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales* page 179 – note 72.

*Alarm Starboard*, Geoffrey Brooke. Pub, 1982 Patrick Stephens Ltd.

*Singapore's Dunkirk*, Geoffrey Brooke. Pub, 1989 Leo Cooper. An extremely important *book* which cannot be overlooked. Page 202 details the loss of HMS *Stronghold*.

*Course for Disaster*, Richard Pool. Pub, 1987 Leo Cooper. A further not to be missed book gives great detail for the events of the time.

*The Escape from Singapore*, Richard Gough. Pub, 1987 William Kimber & Co Ltd. Page 152 gives an interesting personal account of HMS Scout at Padang 1<sup>st</sup> March 1942, *during daylight hours leisurely refuelling* before sailing! Also cannot be missed for the known fate of the, little ships.

*Operation Pacific The Royal Navy's War against Japan 1941-1945*, Edwyn Gray Pub, 1990 Leo Cooper. An Excellent account contains much information for the period.

*Battle of the Java Sea*, David Thomas Pub, 1968 Andre Deutsch Ltd. A scarce and very important work contains much information, probably the definitive work for the Battle of the Java Sea.

*The Battle of the Java Sea*, F.C. Van Oosten, Pub, 1976 Ian Allen Ltd. Compiled mainly from official Dutch sources.

*The Remorseless Road Singapore to Nagasaki* James McEwan, Pub 1997 Airline Publishing Ltd. Contains page 19 fate of *Thanet* survivors and other Java Sea references, 22-27, 117, 123.

*The Judy Story. The Dog With Six Lives*, E. Varley, Pub, 1973. Souvenir Press Ltd. An excellent account much material for the Yangtze, Singapore and after.

*HMS Electra*, AV Sellwood, Pub, 1959 Frederick Muller Ltd (page 189 contains an anecdote of Lt Cdr Lampton RN. Commanding Officer of HMS Scout) not to be missed account of *Electra* and the Java Sea Battle where she was lost.

*The Lonely Battle* Desmond Wettern, Pub 1960 W.H. Allen & Co Ltd.

*Battleship. The Loss of the Prince of Wales and the Repulse* Martin Middlebrook and Patrick Mahoney Pub, 1977 Allen Lane. Much other general information, a definitive work.

*Warship Losses of World War Two*, David Brown, Pub 1990 Arms and Armour Press.

*A Dictionary of Ships of the Royal Navy of the Second World War*, John Young, Pub 1975 Patrick Stephens Ltd.

*Main Fleet to Singapore*, Captain Russell Grenfell R.N. Pub, mcml Faber and Faber Ltd

*Out in The Midday Sun*, Kate Caffrey, Pub, 1973 Stein and Day.

*Out of the Smoke*, Ray Parkin, Pub, 1960 The Hogarth Press. Contains contemporary descriptions of Java after the sinking of HMAS Perth in the Battle of the Java Sea. Also its companion volume, *Into the Smother*, Hogarth Press 1963, details the survivor's ordeal at the hands of the Japanese.

*Japan's War at Sea*, David A. Thomas, Pub, 1978 Andre Deutsch.

*War at Sea. South African Maritime Operations during World War II*. C.J. Harris Ashanti Publishing, Cape Town 1991. Pages 137-142.

*Everyman's History of the Sea War*. A.C. Hardy Pub, Nicholson & Watson 1948-1955 in three volumes. Vol.11 page 46-62 details the Battle of the Java Sea. Page 52 gives an account of the sinking of the Dutch destroyer *Kortenaer*.

*The Hermes Adventure*. The loss of HMS Hermes and subsequent, 1981 diving operation on her. The Runciman Press Australia and Robert Hale 1985. Page 127 details loss of HMAS Vampire.

**10,150 words 18 pages**